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[THE WARNING.]

THE GIPSY PEER; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

CHAPTER XXVI.

If it be sure
I must this heavy burden bear for aye,
My life will be like his whom, legend says,
Unto a corpse was chained. Marston.

THE reader may have felt some surprise that Lurli had been left undisturbed and unmolested so long, but the reason for the respite was to be found in Lord Raymond's caution.

Though he did not fear any ill consequences to himself from any astuteness Mr. Samuel Hitcham might possess, he yet thought it only common precaution to keep a close guard on his own speech and action for some time to come.

Therefore, lest his steps might be dogged by friend or enemy, he let Lurli alone for the present, and confined himself to playing the still difficult game which was necessary to avert suspicion from himself and to reap the rewards of his crime.

He knew that he could trust his servants at the Richmond villa, for they had been in his service some time, and they were bound to him by the strongest of all ties—self-interest.

His cunning device, too, of proclaiming Lurli insane relieved him of any fears of rescue, and so, having netted his delicate wood-pigeon, he thought he would leave her in her cage for awhile.

Meanwhile matters progressed at Northcliffe without any great change.

Lord Northcliffe still continued weak, both in body and mind, and although improved sufficiently to allow of his removal to another part of the house where a fresh suite of rooms had been prepared for him, the London doctor forbade him either to leave the house for the present, or to concern himself in any business, however pressing it might be.

Lady Northcliffe was always with him, ministering to his every want and anticipating his every wish.

The Earl of Northcliffe being thus incapacitated

from all business, the management of the estates had devolved upon Lord Raymond, and, to the surprise of all who knew his character, he set about his stewardship with something approaching a steadiness of purpose.

Soon the tenants and other people about the estate discovered another trait in his singular and not altogether prepossessing character.

My Lord Raymond was avaricious, and whereas his father had always been slow to demand money and quick to bestow it, Lord Raymond not only demanded his due but enforced its payment, and closed his large coarse hand in parsimonious charity to the poor.

The steward, an old servant as easy-going as the earl himself, soon found that if he wished to continue in favour with his new master he must put the screw on the tenants, refuse all their requests for time or repairs, and raise the revenue of the estates as high as possible.

This fresh exhibition of the young man's character gave great distress to Lord and Lady Dartagle, but they comforted themselves by the reflection that he had compensated for his newly born avarice by his equally novel sobriety.

Lord Raymond had almost become a teetotaler, it was said, and so thorough a business man that he would have passed muster as an attorney's clerk. Not very high praise this, and yet Lord and Lady Dartagle were grateful for it.

In their eyes he was still a son-in-law to be wished for, and lately they watched Florence anxiously for some sign of her liking for the young lord.

They might watch Florence, but, as Hamlet said, they could not play upon her though she were as simple as a pipe.

A great change was passing over the high-born daughter of Eariscount. She was learning the bitterest lesson life holds—to love and to doubt.

She loved Tazoni, and to her inexpressible agony she was almost beginning to doubt.

If he was indeed guiltless of the crime Lord Raymond did not hesitate to lay to his charge, why did he not come forward like the hero she had

thought him, and prove his innocence? Why did he keep in hiding like the criminal they would have him?

She could not decide this question, not being in full possession of the facts, and the gray shadow of distrust not only for Tazoni but for all men was falling over her.

She rode, walked, talked, even laughed and sang as usual, but though the flower was externally as beautiful and perfect as of old the little inner sorrow was nestling in her bosom and eating at her heart.

During those weeks of anxiety and gloom one individual at Northcliffe had seemed to slip from notice.

That was Marion Smeaton. But she had not in reality, and on no one did Lord Raymond keep such a sharp watch and ward as upon the white-faced, sorrowful-eyed and easily frightened Marion.

If he met her—which he did very seldom—he would eye her beneath his thick eyebrows with intense distrust.

She was the perpetual thorn in his side, the skeleton in his cupboard, and at last, harassed by her occasional appearance, he determined to make an effort to remove her from the house to some spot not too far from his surveillance, but sufficiently distant to keep her from his sight. For that purpose he had a small cottage near the woods fitted up, and one morning, meeting her on the stairs, said, suddenly:

"Oh, Marion, I want you to look after the Wood Cottage. Some of the keepers want lodgings and looking after, and I should like to have the cottage occupied, so that they could get what they want without coming up to the house and hanging about the kitchen offices."

Marion Smeaton, who had trembled during the whole of the time he had been speaking, bowed her head and passed aimlessly up the stairs.

In a few hours he saw her from his own room walking down the carriage drive, with her small bundle in her hand, and he could not repress a long sigh of relief.

"Thank Heaven, she's got out of the house, I



never felt able to breathe while she was in it. But I'm surprised she's gone so easily, and I suppose that there will be some fuss over it with my lady. I can't think what makes her and the old man so fond of that woman. It's a mystery to me."

He sighed again as he sat down to his desk and frowned darkly at the pile of letters which lay in his private drawer.

Alas, for the successful career of vice! The proceeds of his crime had not reached his hands yet, and the Jews were reminding him of his written promises.

While he thought and wondered where his fearful accomplice was hiding, and feared with a passionate terror that he would deceive and trick him by making off with all the money and jewels, a servant knocked at the door with the humility which distinguished the domestics when they approached their morose and irritable young lord.

"Come in," he said, hastily pushing the drawer in and locking it.

The servant, a new one, came in and said that a man wished to see Lord Raymond, and although the servant had requested him to send his name and state the nature of his business, the visitor had declined, and declared that he would not go until his demand to see Lord Raymond had been conveyed to him.

Raymond hesitated for a moment, then said, sharply:

"You may show him up."

A few minutes after the footman re-opened the door and admitted—Luke Smeaton.

Lord Raymond rose to his feet, his trembling hands clutching the arm of his writing-chair, but a warning raising of the eyebrows on the poacher's part reminded him of the servant's presence, and, with an imperious nod, he dismissed the footman before saying a word.

Luke Smeaton eyed him for a moment with a curious, almost amused expression, then, with a respectful duck of the head, he said:

"I've made so bold as to intrude on your lordship to ask you a favour."

At the respectful tone and formal words Lord Raymond eyed him questioningly, and sank into his chair.

What petition was the extraordinary ruffian going to make?

"To ask a favour," replied Luke, twisting his cap round with a very good imitation of rustic nervousness. "I've heard that your lordship requires a keeper, a man as you can trust, and as I'm used to preserves and knows the duties required of a keeper, I thought your lordship would pardon the liberty if I applied for the place."

Lord Raymond saw at once that his accomplice had determined to ignore that fearful night and to act even when they were alone as if there had been no former connection or even meeting between them.

He took up his paper-knife and pretended to examine it to gain time, and Luke's sharp eyes did not fail to see how the knife trembled.

"Well," said Lord Raymond, at last, and without lifting his eyes to Luke's face, "I do want a keeper, and I have no objection to you, my man, if you can procure a good character."

"My name is Smeaton, Luke Smeaton, my lord," said Luke, keeping up the assumption very easily. "I am your foster-mother's husband."

"Then you have a claim upon my consideration," said Raymond. "Pray sit down."

Luke sat down and continued:

"As to character, I've been serving a nobleman abroad for a bit as a sort of handy man; he's dead now, but he was so kind as to give me a written character before he died, and there it is."

And with a faint smile he stretched out one hand and laid a bundle of papers upon the table.

Lord Raymond took up the packet, and, wondering why Luke was keeping up the farce so thoroughly, tore off the envelope.

The character consisted of a tightly folded packet of bank-notes—Lord Raymond's share of the plunder!

He turned deadly pale, and clutched the packet in his closed hand as if he feared that some one was looking over his shoulder.

"Is the character quite satisfactory, my lord?" inquired Luke, with the same cool self-possession.

"Quite," breathed Raymond, faintly; "I—I engage you. You—you may go."

"What wages may I expect, your lordship?" asked he, rising.

"Two hundred a year," said Lord Raymond.

Luke Smeaton smiled deeply, and moved nearer the door.

"And the board, my lord, what about that? My wife has gone to live at the cottage, I hear; perhaps—"

He was struck by a fearful change that had come over Lord Raymond's face. It was as if he had seen the gallows rising before him, and would warn Luke that he did so.

Luke stared.

"Go!" said Lord Raymond. "You may live at the cottage—where you like; but—but go, I am busy!" and with a trembling hand he pointed to the door, and almost before Luke had gone his head fell upon his hands.

Idiot that he was to think himself safe! Why, one man in a hangman's secret was sufficient, so they said, to draw the rope. How much more cause then he had to dread, when he remembered that in that cottage in the wood dwelt two persons who could reveal the secrets of that dreadful night?

So terrible and threatening seemed the danger, and so fierce his desire for Luke's and Marion Smeaton's removal, that it is not too much to say that if he could have slain them by holding up his hand he would have raised his clasped fist to Heaven with a prayer for their annihilation.

Much astonishment was expressed by high and low round Northcliffe that Luke Smeaton should be taken into Northcliffe favour and service, and people remarked that not long ago Lord Raymond had evinced the most intense dislike for the gipsies, and had even spoken of Luke Smeaton himself as a rogue and a vagabond. But there was no disputing Lord Raymond's word, it was law—and of a most despotic kind. No one was to dispute it or question its justice or consistency.

Luke Smeaton too gave little cause for gossip. He was quiet, taciturn, and true to his duties—for the present—with laudable honesty and modesty. There had been a scene of a most painful nature between man and wife when Luke arrived at the cottage, and Marion was reported to have said that she would not remain in the same house with him; but in the end he conquered. Her fear of him was too great to allow of her carrying her threat into execution, and so they lived together, seeing little of each other, as Luke was out night and day, and only home to his meals, and giving no handle for curiosity or gossip amidst the husbands and their wives.

Whenever Lord Raymond met his new keeper, which he did on the average six times a week, the man always touched his hat respectfully, and Lord Raymond always acknowledged the salute with a courtesy which he did not return upon his other servants.

After awhile—everything going on quietly at Northcliffe, Mr. Samuel Hitchem safe away in London on the hunt for Tazoni—Lord Raymond thought he might venture to look after his affairs in London.

Accordingly one morning he entered Lady Northcliffe's boudoir and announced his intention of starting for town.

"You will not stay long, Raymond?" said the countess. "Your poor father may miss you."

"Scarcely," replied Lord Raymond, sullenly. "You forget he never asks for me."

"Raymond!" exclaimed Lady Northcliffe, reproachfully. "You should not speak in such a tone of our great sorrow. Remember that under such an affliction those whom they love best they desire to see least. It's a phase of your father's illness. But I hope—Heaven knows how fervently—I trust that he may completely recover. Should he do so while you are absent and ask for you?"

"You may send for me," said Lord Raymond, with all his old brusqueness. "Better address all letters to the club."

"Won't you go to the house in Park Lane?" asked Lady Northcliffe, anxious for his comfort.

"No," he replied, kissing her coldly. "I don't want to be shut up in that huge place like Robinson Crusoe or a prisoner in the Bastille. I shall go to Menrice's," and he left the room.

As he was being taken to the station in his dog-cart he saw Luke Smeaton leaning against a stile.

He touched his hat so significantly that Lord Raymond, looking at his watch with an impatient frown, told the groom to pull up for a moment, and called out:

"Do you want to speak to me?"

Luke Smeaton leapt the ditch, and, advancing with his gun under his arm, touched his hat.

"I heard as you was going up to London, my lord, and I thought I'd ask you about them cartridges; they've been ordered some time, but they haven't come down and we're in want of 'em. I've wrote the name of the shop on this 'ere bit of paper if your lordship should think proper to call an' inquire."

And he handed up a piece of paper.

Lord Raymond took it and glanced at it.

The address of the gunmaker's shop was at least peculiar.

"Beware of the detective Mister Hitchem."

Lord Raymond looked up and muttered:

"Very well, I'll look to it."

And as the horse trotted on again he tore up the small piece of paper into fragments, much to the astonishment of the groom, who thought it was scarcely the way to treat a memorandum or an address.

In London, Lord Raymond left word at his club for the receipt of all letters, and taking a hansom

drove down to St. Mary Axe, where, much to Mr. Levy's surprise, he paid that gentleman's little bill with all its appendices in the shape of interest, etc. From the money-lender's he drove to the jeweller's, who had most pestered him during the last six months.

He was received with every courtesy, which increased to abject respect when he took a cheque from his pocket and demanded a receipt.

The jeweller was astonished and uneasy.

The articles for which the debt had been contracted were expensive presents to actresses and ballet-girls, and he had got a profit so enormous that he could afford to wait even longer for his money than he had done. Now he was afraid that he had dunned his wealthy customer a little too much, and was not undecieved when Lord Raymond said:

"This is all I owe, I think. Now, Mr. Carbuncle, let me give you a piece of advice. When a gentleman condescends to give you an order and does not choose to pay you the next five minutes, better wait until he can and not worry him with insolent letters. This is the last time I enter your shop."

And with an insolent nod he passed out; the door being opened by an abject assistant.

No sooner had he gone than Mr. Carbuncle, almost with tears in his eyes, turned to a gentleman who had remained hidden by a high stand of jewellery, an unseen witness to Lord Raymond's anger.

"Very unlucky, Mr. Hitchem, very unlucky! I'd no idea his lordship meant to pay so soon, and I thought he'd want a little dunning. A great pity, a great pity! His lordship was one of my best customers, and I'm afraid I've lost him!"

And he sighed deeply as he examined the cheque.

"Will you allow me?" said Mr. Hitchem, who had looked on with a little jewel robbery and appeared as lifeless and somnolent as usual. "Will you allow me to look at that cheque for a moment?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Carbuncle, and he handed the slip of paper to the detective.

"Hum!" observed Mr. Hitchem. "Drawn on Counts. Nice; hand Lord Raymond writes. Glad you've got your money, Mr. Carbuncle; after all, a bird in the hand's worth two in the bush. About that other matter, I will see that it is properly gone through with: Good morning."

And slowly Mr. Hitchem left the shop, asking himself this question all the time:

"Now where does Lord Raymond's sudden flow of cash come from? If he's paid Carbuncle's bill he's paid the Jews, and if he's managed them he must have some to go on with. Altogether a pretty large sum; too large to be chiselled out of the steward's account. Then where the dickens did he get it?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

Caged though she be, yet that proud soul
Can earthly bars and bonds control. *Whittier.*

LORD RAYMOND started the following morning for Richmond.

The day being fine he thought it would be as well to ride one of the hacks from the London stables, but on consideration determined to exercise due caution, and was taken down in his brougham.

When the carriage stopped at the little iron gates of the villa, Lurli heard it, and her heart beat with the wild hope that succour had arrived.

Alas! she heard the gate relocked, a soft footstep on the staircase, and a few moments after the door opened, and Lord Raymond stood before her.

The girl sprang to her feet and eyed him with breathless hatred.

"Well," he said, advancing towards her with a sinister smile, "how does my little tigress like her new cage? Rather an improvement on a dirty tent or a gipsy encampment, eh?"

And he smiled affably.

Lurli's lips closed tightly, and as he came nearer she shrank back towards the couch upon which she had been reclining.

"Come," said Lord Raymond, stopping in the middle of the room; "you don't mean to say that you are not glad to see me, after all I've done for you. Come and shake hands."

Lurli's eyes flashed.

"You shall not touch me," she cried; "not even with your finger. I hate you! I hate you!"

Lord Raymond frowned.

"Haven't you been happy? Aren't you satisfied?"

And he glanced round the luxuriously furnished room, also at the rich dress which she had been compelled to wear—her own having been taken from her.

"Happy!" she echoed, with passionate scorn. "Satisfied! You mock me, my lord. Is the eagle happy when you cage him? I was as free as the eagle, and loved my liberty as much as he does. You have robbed me of my friends, and all that could make me happy, yet you mock me with the question."

"You're improved," said Lord Raymond, eyeing

her admiringly. "You talk to me like a Christian, but just as grand as ever. Why shouldn't you be happy? You've got everything you want except the liberty to wander about the country with a pack of vagabonds—and that you never will have again."

Lurli shrank on to the couch and covered her face with her hands; her proud spirit gave way beneath the brutal force of that threat.

Never see Tazoni, Martha, Zillah, all her good, true friends again! It was too terrible.

"Oh, my lord!" she cried, throwing herself at his feet, "forgive me for being so wild, so rude; but let me go, let me go! I shall never be happy shut up away from the rest of them; I shall never cease to cry day and night until I die if you keep me. Oh, let me go, my lord! You are great and rich and powerful, and I am only a common, worthless gipsy girl, not worth a moment's thought. Let me go back to my friends, my lord; oh, let me go, and I will bless your name all day and all night, and never forget to be grateful and thankful. Only let me go!"

In her agony of supplication she grasped his hand and moistened it with her tears.

Raymond never enjoyed himself so much in his life.

To have her at his feet—so beautiful, so piteous, and so helpless—was a repast for the vicious man's diseased vanity too sweet to be over-prized.

As she took his hand he grasped her round her waist.

"Tamed at last, eh?"

At his touch Lurli's mood changed like lightning.

She sprang to her feet and tore herself from his grasp, and, before he could detain her, she had gained the other side of the couch panting and passionate.

"Tamed!" she breathed, echoing his words. "No, and Lurli never will be by so base and miserable a creature! If you are a man then Tazoni, Collin—may, the very dumb beasts are something higher and better. Keep off, Lord Raymond, I will die rather than you should touch me!"

Lord Raymond, laughing at her distress and indignation, strode to the sofa, and attempted to catch her arm.

Lurli struck him on the breast with her closed hand and sprang to the window.

It was unlatched; with a blow of her fist she dashed it open and sprang upon the narrow ledge, clinging to the wall and swaying half out and half in the room.

Raymond stared in speechless amazement. His face paled and for the moment he seemed speechless.

"Come down!" he cried, at last. "You little idiot! you'll break your neck! Come down."

"No!" said Lurli, defiantly. "I will remain here till you have left the room and the house! Keep back, Lord Raymond, you have not tamed Lurli yet nor will do so until she lies on those stones below dead and bleeding! Come a step nearer and I fling myself there."

And, with a shudder, she pointed to the paved courtyard below.

"No, no!" said Lord Raymond. "Come down, I tell you. I won't hurt you. Come down at once or you will—"

He ventured to step towards her and Lurli loosened one hand and away to and fro.

"Stop!" he cried, fearfully. "I'm going—I am going! I'll leave the house—go to the fiend if you like—only come down!"

Lurli pointed her disengaged hand to the door.

"Leave the room and the house," she gasped.

Lord Raymond, fearing that if he did not obey her slight hold on the side of the window would relax and that she would, with or against her will, fall into the courtyard, caught up his hat and left the room.

Lurli heard his footsteps descending the stairs, but she remained in her dangerous position until he had entered the brougham and driven away.

Then, sick and giddy, the courageous girl dropped from her place of refuge and fell fainting on the floor.

Thoroughly disgusted with the result of his visit to the miserable girl whom he had entrapped and rendered unhappy, the ignoble Lord Raymond looked about for some compensation.

Naturally his thoughts flew to Miss Emilia Slade.

Whatever happened, nothing could occur at No. 27, Norman Road, to disturb him—let whoever else be disagreeable and annoying, Emilia Slade was sure to be pleasant and amiable; so when he arrived in town again he had a little luncheon at his club, and, ordering dinner there at eight o'clock, was driven to No. 27, Norman Road, Belgrave.

To his inquiry a neatly attired footman in yellow livery replied that his mistress was at home, and, upon Lord Raymond giving him his card, he showed the greatest respect and alacrity in admitting him.

Lord Raymond was ushered into a small but tastefully furnished drawing-room, and the footman,

after wheeling to the table an exceedingly comfortable chair, went to announce him.

There was a bright fire burning in the polished steel grate, and the whole room possessed an air of comfort which Lord Raymond found particularly grateful.

In a few minutes Miss Emilia entered, and, holding out both hands, welcomed him with effusion.

She was so glad, so very glad to see him. And how well he looked! She was so glad for that too, considering the bustle and anxiety he had gone through.

"But there!" she added, quickly, seeing that the subject was distasteful. "We will not talk of that. I know how dear Lord Northcliffe is, for I hear from Florence occasionally. And are you staying long in town?"

"I don't know," said Lord Raymond, stroking his moustache and stretching himself comfortably before the fire. "I may stay long, or I may go back to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" said Emilia, with a suppressed sigh. "Then you will dine with us to-night, Lord Raymond? My aunt is a great invalid and I do not see much of her, so I hope you will excuse a formal invitation, but I am sure she will be so pleased to see you."

Lord Raymond said that he had ordered dinner at his club.

"Oh, I am so sorry!" said Miss Emilia. "But will you dine with us to-morrow? Such a quiet little party! Only ourselves, say, and Mr. Denville, who is an old and favourite friend of my aunt's."

"Denville!" said Lord Raymond, suspiciously. "I thought he had left England last month."

"No—he is so fickle! I believe he is not going after all. I do admire firmness and constancy in a man. I am sure you cannot rely on most men, and I always said at Earls Court that it was always pleasant to arrange a walk or drive with you because one felt sure that one would not be disappointed. But about to-morrow? You will come, will you not?"

Lord Raymond accepted the invitation, and after chatting quite fluently for him, took his departure, having received the impression of comfort and self-satisfaction which the designing Miss Emilia had laboured to give him.

Half an hour after he had gone Mr. Denville called. Things had not gone at all well with that accomplished gentleman since the failure of his attempt to snare Lady Florence, but his handsome countenance was as meek and untroubled as ever, notwithstanding that Lord Raymond's four hundred pounds had nearly vanished already and the Jews were growing clamorous. Miss Emilia was delighted to see him, and seemed in such good spirits that Mr. Denville remarked upon her cheerfulness.

"Somebody left you a fortune, Milly, or are you going to be married?" he asked, with a smile that was not altogether pleasant.

"The wind blows from the south when you least expect it," said Miss Emilia, quoting a Spanish proverb. "Who has been here, do you think?"

Mr. Denville did not take the trouble to guess but shook his head and poked the fire.

"None less than your noble young friend and rough-skinned cub, Lord Raymond!"

"Never!" he exclaimed, with mild astonishment.

"Yes," said Emilia, "and he comes here to-morrow, with you."

"Does he?" he said. "Don't be too sure of that. I don't know whether I care to meet him."

"You must," said Miss Emilia. "It is of the utmost importance that we make him comfortable. I know he is not happy at Northcliffe, and I want him in London."

"Away from the antagonistic neighbourhood of Lady Florence," said Mr. Denville, with a scowl at the name.

"Exactly," said Miss Emilia, candidly. "I want to make him feel quite at home here, and—"

Mr. Denville, who had been staring at the fire thoughtfully while she had been speaking, looked up suddenly with a flush and an exclamation that positively startled her.

"Milly," he said, "listen to what I've got to say and don't be contemptuous. Don't throw the failure of my own little plot in my face when I tell you that I've hit upon an idea for you."

"Let me hear it," said Miss Emilia.

Mr. Denville got up from his chair, opened the door to see if there were any appearances of eavesdroppers and resumed his seat, which he drew quite close to his faithful friend and ally.

"Milly," he said, more impressively than she had ever heard him speak before in her life. "You must keep that young cub in London for a bit, keep him dangling about here away from Florence Dartle and I think I can hit upon a plan to catch him."

"For whom?" asked Miss Slade, rather coldly, not seeing at present to whose advantage Mr. Denville's new idea tended.

"For whom? Why, for you!" he continued, more directly.

Then, in a low voice, he unfolded his plot, developing into a full-blown flower of villainy as he went on.

Miss Slade's pale face flushed with excitement as she heard the plot in detail, and her thin lips trembled with eagerness.

"You see," he asked, eagerly, "if you can play your hand well we must succeed. If he were a shade less vile and mean we should fail, but he is cowardly and dishonourable enough for anything. He will jump at the offer I make him and do his best to prove himself the villain."

"If we succeed, he can't complain," murmured Miss Slade, overcoming her last scruples.

"Complain? No!" said Mr. Denville, with a mocking laugh. "It is only a case of digging a pit and falling into it oneself. You leave him to me and follow my directions and you shall triumph over Lady Florence and the rest of them. I can wait for my reward, which I know won't be a small one, when you are Lady—"

"Hush!" said Miss Emilia, as a servant entered.

"Then we shall see you to-morrow night, Mr. Denville," and, with the utmost politeness, she shook hands and the servant showed him out with all the form due to the ordinary morning caller.

Lord Raymond's club was a high-playing, fast-going one, and at eight o'clock there were half a dozen of his old acquaintances at the table, amusing him with the latest scandal and the odds on the next races.

For the first time for some weeks the young lord was tempted to make free with the wine, and before the cheese had been round he was in what he would have called "excellent spirits," and there was as much laughter at his table as would have supplied the whole room on ordinary occasions, for Lord Raymond was considered to be amusing when he was half intoxicated. Vain, self-conceited and arrogant in a ridiculous degree, at such times he had always been the butt of the aristocrats, and to-night they were delighted to find their old sport to hand again.

While the fun was at the height of its progress a tall, fair-haired gentleman entered the smoking-room, to which Lord Raymond and his friends had adjourned, and with a listless, indifferent gait sauntered to the end of the room.

Several of the men round Lord Raymond nodded as he passed, and Raymond, tipsily curious, asked in a thick voice who the stranger was.

"A new member," replied one of his companions, "and a rare swell. One of your lady-killers, you know; too lazy to go to sleep. You know the sort?"

"I know," said Lord Raymond, thickly. "A fool?"

"Exactly," laughed his friend; "though you'd better lower your voice, for the 'fool' has a character for courage. You don't mean to say you never heard of him, Lord Hursley—you must have heard of Henry Beauchere, the Yorkshire baronet."

"Not I," said Lord Raymond, insolently. "What's a Yorkshire baronet to me?"

His friend laughed again, and winking to his companions filled his glass again.

"It would be a good thing to set him on to Sir Henry," whispered one of them, maliciously. "Give him a little more wine, and let us see if we can't manage it."

This Sir Henry Beauchere, whom Lord Raymond's friend had invested with celebrity, was in a certain degree famous, and worth looking at.

He was the possessor of one of England's largest estates, had been a soldier, and roughed it with the roughest at the Peninsula, had wearied of the army and taken a turn in the navy; wearying of that also, he had settled down on his estate in the west of England, and played at country gentleman. He had wearied of that pastime after a rather lengthy trial, which would have ended successfully had not, as rumour said, he given his heart to a London belle, who had amused her leisure with flirting with him during the off season and jilting him at the commencement of the next.

This disappointment had so overthrown him that he had imbibed a most steadfast disbelief in the virtue or the goodness of the opposite sex, and though he ever treated them with the most polished respect, avoided all close contact with them, and was believed to prefer a combat with six grizzled Russians to a tête-à-tête with a young lady.

This one-sided misanthropy he backed up by a most consummate indolence. Nothing ever moved him from his steady progress through the turbulent world. In the summer he lolled away the day in his boat on the Thames, in the winter he sauntered leisurely and passively through the gaieties of town.

He never accepted an invitation to any house where there were ladies, therefore he never refused a day's shooting or fishing at any bachelor's invite. Tall, fair, handsome, and of old family, every one said Sir Henry Beauchere would die a bachelor, and that the old name would die out.

This night he was sitting in a comfortable chair, smoking his cigar with half-closed eyes, and seeming quite undisturbed by the laughing of the party near him.

While he was apparently in a slumbrous unconsciousness a friend came in and crossed over to him.

They dropped into conversation, if Sir Harry's monosyllabic remarks could be termed such, and suddenly his friend said:

"What a row Lord Hursley is making to-night. I thought we'd got clear of him and that he had settled in the country; but he's only up for a short time, I hope; there's always this row when he's here."

Sir Harry nodded pleasantly. "I don't notice them," he said. Then, as if something had occurred to him, he raised his head and looked at the group. "Tell me which is Lord Hursley?" he asked, slowly.

"That dark, ill-tempered looking fellow," replied his friend.

"Hem! looks like an amateur lunatic keeper," murmured Sir Harry.

"What on earth do you mean?" asked his friend.

"What I said," retorted Sir Harry, quietly.

"Your rising young friend has turned his villa near me into a lunatic asylum."

"What, the villa at Richmond?"

"Yes," nodded Sir Harry. "It's near my place there, you know, but I was never inside it, and if that gentleman is the owner, never want to be. Well, I hate long stories, but I suppose I must go on with this or you'll badger my life out. Some time ago, when my boat was there, I used to row up from my villa and moor her off the bank opposite those trees on the right shore—you know?"

"I know," said his friend.

"One day, while I was reading, I saw a woman—a girl—come to the window at the back of the villa and sit down to what females usually call a 'good cry.'"

"The deuce you did!" exclaimed his friend, with interest.

"Is there anything unusual in that?" asked Sir Harry, with mild sarcasm. "'Women must weep,' you know, and 'men must work,' so the poet says, though I'm glad there are some exceptions in the men's case. Well, these domestic affairs were no business of mine, and I went on with my book—or my sleep—I was sleeping I think. But next day the comedy was repeated. A boat, a book, a window and a girl weeping at it. The next day the same, and the next the same. It grew monotonous and, what was worse, irritating. In the old days before—never mind what—I should have played the idiot and asked questions, perhaps scaled the wall and offered myself as Romeo to her Juliet. But I was more sensible and determined to moor the boat at some other place."

"That night—the night of my determination, I mean—my valet, a chattering scandal-mongering idiot, whose tongue I never can stop, told me that there was a young relation of Lord Raymond's stopping at his villa, and that she was kept in confinement because she was insane. That, of course, settled the matter, and, as I liked the old place, I rowed up there and moored my boat as usual."

"She was at her old place also as usual, and this time she attracted my attention and beckoned to me."

"You went, of course?" asked his friend, with eager interest.

"Why on earth should I?" said Sir Harry, with mild surprise. "No, I bowed, shook my head, and rowed away. Poor girl! She is the first—and last—I shall ever pity."

"It's very strange," said his friend. "Was she pretty?"

"Very," replied Sir Harry, yawning. "But pray don't let us return to the subject."

"But—"

"Oh, if you will talk I'll go at once to bed," laughed Sir Harry, as he rose slowly.

At that moment Lord Raymond's friends had arrived at that pitch of conviviality which renders those subject to it troublesome neighbours.

Sir Harry in passing happened to touch Lord Raymond with his coat.

Lord Raymond turned with drunken savageness and demanded to know why Sir Harry was not more careful.

With a quiet, contemptuous look Sir Harry was about to pass on, but some one pushed Raymond, and he had the effrontery to strike Sir Harry Beauclerc on the shoulder.

Sir Harry quietly knocked him down and sauntered from the room as if it were a constant practice of his to wind up the night with, and when his friend, who had stopped long enough to pick up Lord Raymond and assure himself of his intoxication, found him as calm and cool as usual.

"Drunk?" he asked.

"Quite," said his friend, "and, though I am sorry you should have been annoyed, old fellow, I'm not sorry you gave him his punishment."

"Don't mention it," said Sir Harry. "I'm ashamed of it, but I never could bear another man's hand upon me—a peculiarity, I think, not un-

common. Drunk was he? and he looked a fool too. A pretty guardian for a poor, demented girl."

And with these words he hurried from his friend and walked quietly home to his luxurious but solitary chambers.

It would have been as well for Sir Harry's peace of mind, perhaps, if they had not been quite so solitary, for, having no one to speak to nor anything else to think about, he must needs think of the "poor, demented girl" who was shut up in the villa of her relation, the drunken, dissolute Lord Hursley.

Oaks spring from acorns, and the wayfarer who trudges through the world little dreams of the great things which are in progress beneath his feet.

As little did poor Lurli dream of so powerful and popular a gentleman as Sir Harry Beauclerc mixing her pretty, miserable, tear-wet face with his dreams.

(To be continued.)

OVER THE CRADLE.

BESIDE the open casement,
With the sweet sunshine my guest,
I watched my wee white darling
Asleep in his cradle nest:
My foot upon the rocker—
His pretty hands at rest.
Like crumpled rose-leaves lying
Upon his dimpled breast.

Along the glowing carpet
The idle sunshine lay,
The drowsy shadows slumbered,
Too indolent for play:
A dreamy languor seemed to hold
The pulses of the day,
And only thought went toiling on
To the vague years far away.

Without, in the branching woodbine,
Some restless mother bird
With querulous silvery twittering
The fragrant silence stirred—
A great gold-freckled butterfly
Against the lattice whirled—
And the rustle of nodding roses
Were all the sounds I heard.

Over the swaying cradle
I leant with a weary sigh,
Half for the cheating brightness
Of the summer slipping by—
For the light and the grace and glory
Of the glad things doomed to die—
And half for the boding sadness
Of the autumn drawing nigh!

Till a wind came out of the Westland,
A wind that was low and sweet—
Came singing over the meadow,
And through the yellowing wheat,
And about the tangled woodbine
Under my garden seat,
To kiss the sluggard sunshine,
And the baby's dimpled feet.

The wind came out of the golden West—
The wind that was sweet and low—
Rocking the bird in her bowery nest,
And the red rose to and fro—
"Rest, my pretty ones, sleep and rest—
For Autumn takes, you know,
Downy heads from the brooding breast,
And the time to reap and sow!"

The bird flew into the sunshine
With breezy twitter and call—
The rose with jewelled fingers
Reached up the trellis tall:
The crowing baby leapt to catch
The shadows on the wall—
For the magic of the Western wind
Had snapped sweet slumber's thrall.

E. A. B.

EVIL SPEAKING.—Speaking ill of others is one of the most unamiable habits that can be acquired, and one that leads to infinite mischief. It is not always easy to avoid it, for there are a great many persons in the world who are not what they ought to be, who do many things that they ought not to do. It is hard for a blunt, generous mind to refrain from expressing itself about mean people and mean acts; there is something in meanness and dishonesty that rouses the indignation of such a mind, and it likes the luxury of denouncing them in bold and unsparing terms. But the practice, as a practice, is a troublesome and dangerous one.

A judicious arrangement has been made at Winchester Cathedral by the dean and chapter, whereby in future visitors may be their own guides and instructors. They have directed Mr. F. Baigent, the well-known antiquary, to affix to each chantry chapel or ancient tomb a descriptive outline of the works and dates of the bishops and of many important matters connected with the lives of those who sleep

in death in the Cathedral of the Blessed Trinity. The tablets are glazed and framed in oak, and elegantly written and illuminated. We subjoin an example of the tablets:—"Chapel and Tomb of William de Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, from A.D. 1367 to 1404; the Bishop was twice Lord Chancellor of England—he rebuilt the nave and aisles of the Cathedral and was founder of New College, Oxford—otherwise called St. Mary's College, of Winchester, at Oxford. He died at Bishop's Waltham, September 27th, 1404, in the 80th year of his age, and the 37th of his episcopate."

SOME OF THE DETESTABLES OF LIFE.

To say behind one's back what you dare not say to his face.

To peep into your neighbour's yard for the purpose of finding something to censure.

To gloat in conversation over the defects or misfortunes of others.

To watch other men's business more narrowly than your own.

To pretend friendship for one and yet endeavour to damn him with faint praise when others applaud.

THE SEA OF SAHARA.

There is no longer to be a Desert of Sahara, if the plans of certain ambitious European engineers can be carried out. That whole vast sandy realm is to be submerged, and a great sea is to roll its waves where billows of sand have heaved their bosoms for thousands of years. The camel, long known as the ship of the desert, is to give place to the tug-boat. Sharks and porpoises will disport themselves in the valleys—covered with brine—wherein lions and Bedouins now lurk.

But a doubter comes in, and raises the question: Will there be salt water enough to spare for the creation of this new ocean? It is argued that to cover the desert of Sahara with brine to any great depth would take more salt water than can be spared from present oceans. Or that, at any rate, it would reduce the present ocean level to such an extent as to render it impossible to get a sufficient depth of water on the desert to make the new sea navigable.

We leave the engineers to settle these questions among themselves. The idea is certainly a grand one.

N. F. D.

THE BUZZARDS OF HUMAN NATURE.

It is held by many philosophers that man has in his single nature the elements of every animal, bird, and reptile on the globe.

This alleged philosophical truth is applied in detail by mankind in general. It is common to say that a certain kind of man is a fox; that another is a donkey; another a hog; another a snake. Girls are apt to describe a certain kind of bachelor as "a perfect old bear." Young men, in a certain state of heart, are given to ornithological metaphors and call their sweethearts birds, doves, etc. An affectionate, playful wife sometimes refers to her husband as "a dear old goose." A certain kind of man is always spoken of contemptuously as "an old biddy," because he is weak and fretful, and goes clucking and scratching around like an old hen.

The most revolting creature which is elemental in the human heart, though men are seldom compared to it, is the buzzard.

The buzzard of the air feasts on decaying substances. The buzzard of the heart feasts on decaying character. It revels in slander, and in all the moral debasement which is exhibited by depraved souls in their efforts to drag others down to their own wretched condition.

These buzzards of the heart are found in all ranks of society. Let one of them, in a car, or on a steamboat, or at a party, or in a church vestibule, begin to tear at a bit of scandal ever so gently, and other similar creatures, with like depraved appetites, will gather around.

Let the dove in a man coo good of a fellow mortal, and these same persons will instinctively shrink away from him as a bore, while doves in other hearts respond with answering coos of appreciation.

For our part, we prefer the doves of human nature to the buzzards.

S. F. O.

A munificent bequest to the Commune of Kronstadt (in Germany?) is announced by a German paper, but the benefit of it will not be enjoyed till 100 years hence. Friedrich von Clovis has left all his property to it, with the exception of 6,000 florins to his nephews, with directions that it shall be realized and accumulate in the savings' banks for a century. It will then amount to 8,000,000 gulden, and is to be employed in establishing an orphanage, founding hospital, Protestant college, and other institutions.



[THE WEIRD WOMAN.]

TREVYLIAN; OR, ENTOMBED ALIVE.

CHAPTER I.

I conjure you, by that which you profess (Howe'er you come to know it), answer me: Though you untie the winds, and let them fight Against the churches; though the yesty waves Confound and swallow navigation up; Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down; Though castles topple on their warders' heads; Though palaces and pyramids do slope Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure Of nature's germains tumble all together, Even till destruction slicken, answer To what I ask you. *Shakespeare.*

SIR REGINALD TREVYLIAN and his young bride were standing in front of the little village inn of Haddo, speaking to mine host of the "Royal Arms." They were both young, he eminently handsome and she "beautiful exceedingly."

Sir Reginald was attired in a hunting suit of dark Lincoln green, Lady Trevylian was arrayed in a travelling suit of pale gray, relieved by bows and sash of rose-colour, her white hat trimmed with feathers of the same bright hue, the rose-colour contrasting well with the fair skin, gray-violet eyes, and golden hair that flowed in half-curlled tresses down her shoulders.

"Is there anything else worth seeing in your village?" Sir Reginald asked. "We want to remain here till to-morrow morning, and we have still some hours of daylight left."

"You have seen everything we have worth seeing," was the reply, "unless you like to go up there to the Hill of the Deep Well, and see the weird woman who lives there. She will tell your fortune for you, if you like."

"My fortune!" repeated Sir Reginald. "You do not mean to tell me that people believe in such nonsense as that in the nineteenth century?"

"Ay! I believe in her; she has told me more than one or two things that have come to pass, as well as things I didn't want anyone to know but myself."

"Let us go, Reginald," said his bride. "It will be great fun having our fortunes told."

"As you like," was the reply; "but I fear you will find it but stupid fun after all!"

A guide was provided by the landlord, and away they went, climbing the rocky height by a narrow footpath, which wound at times by the edge of a

precipice, seeming almost perpendicular over the sea below.

At length, entering a wood of tufted pines, a narrow woodland path brought them to the door of the woman's hut.

Here they were left by their guide, and, entering by the open door of the cottage, they were at once in the presence of the weird woman and her grandson.

The former, a gray-haired, tall, gaunt-looking woman, who sat busying herself by spinning flax, gazed on them as they entered with eyes evidently demanding for what they came.

"We have come to get our fortunes told," said Sir Reginald, in answer to the inquiring glance of the old woman.

"Ye'll have to give me a crown for each fortune I tell," she replied, without moving from her seat or discontinuing her work.

"That I will," replied Sir Reginald. "I'll give you two if you'll tell a good fortune to this young lady, who is my bride."

The old woman now came forward, and, taking Lady Trevylian's ungloved hand in her own, looked at it earnestly for a few minutes, she then let the hand drop from her own, saying:

"I have nothing to tell; you have had a happy life every day until now, and you'll have happiness every day of your life maybe till you lie down on your pillow to die."

"That is a very nice fortune," said the young lady. "Now, can you give me a drink of cold water? I am so thirsty."

"Wait till I have my fortune told," said Sir Reginald, extending his palm to the old woman.

She took the offered hand in hers, looked at it for a second or two, and then, almost throwing it from her, said:

"Let the lady get her drink first, she's not going to choke with the heat and thirst while you get your fortune told. Go, Tom," continued she, addressing the boy, "take the wooden bowl and go with the lady to the spring. It's just out there," added she, speaking to Sir Reginald, and pointing as she spoke to a little rill of clear water trickling from the rock not twenty yards from the door of the hut.

Lady Trevylian and the boy went to the spring, while Sir Reginald waited to have his fortune told. As soon as the old woman thought it safe to do so she said, in solemn tones:

"That bonny bride of yours will either be lying below the green grass before this time next year—and all your love and your gold cannot buy her an hour longer life—or else she'll bear a sad yoke and lead a

troubled life from the day she's six years your wife; whether she'll ever have a quiet or happy heart again I cannot tell. Now let me see your hand."

Sir Reginald felt more inclined to tell the old woman to the earth for her evil tidings than to show her his hand, but she seemed to exercise a spell over him, constraining him, against his better judgment, to do her bidding.

"There's a black crime here," said she, the moment she took his hand in hers; "it's neither murder nor theft, but it's a black, black crime, and it's been committed six years ago, and it's going on and on, and you're committing it every day you rise, and it'll follow you for six years to come."

The man shook while the old woman spoke—shook with both fear and rage. He knew she told the truth, he feared her words, yet her spell was on him; he had no power to leave her.

"You have lots of money and servants and land," continued she, "but you're not the rightful owner of a rood of the land or a crown of the gold, nor does the owner's blood flow in your veins."

He pulled his hand rudely from her as she uttered the last words, and, throwing down the money she had asked for, hurried out of the hut, saying as he did so:

"You confounded old impostor, your fortune is black enough, death to my bride, and for me"—he stopped there, continuing in an undertone which none could hear: "The old woman spoke but too truly when she alluded to the crime that follows me by day and night, but she spoke falsely when she said that I had no right to the land by my blood."

He was now by his wife's side, who was retracing her steps in the direction of the old woman's hut.

"Come Ethel, we will go back again. I have had my fortune read."

"And what did she tell you? I hope your life will be all happiness like mine."

"Oh! she told me a lot of stuff. You know I do not believe in those things."

Sir Reginald Trevylian was trying not to believe, and yet fifty times in the course of the evening he asked himself the question.

"How could the old woman tell so clearly of my past life? It is possible she may be able to tell me when that miserable man will find relief in death—from the horrible death in life which he now lives. I have half a mind to go back and hear what she will say."

Later in the day Lady Trevylian's beautiful eyes were sealed in slumber.

She had been walking about the whole day, and her sleep was heavy and deep.

Sir Reginald was climbing the rocky height, up to the weird woman's hut among the pine trees.

"Confound her," he said, as his footsteps approached the door, "the old croaker, I hate her. Yet as she certainly has told me part of the past, she may tell me what I so earnestly desire to know of the future, if that man were dead, died by a natural cause, I would have no reason to fear. I have no reason to fear now, but I have what is worse, remorse that lies down with me and rises up with me. It is indeed, as she said, a black crime, perhaps the blackest crime a man can commit against his fellow, and yet Heaven knows that I never contemplated such a thing—that I was goaded on to it—that I never thought of such a crime until it was committed. I would give half of all I possess to be as innocent as I was on the morning of the day it was done."

He found himself again in the presence of the old woman and her grandson.

They were both occupied as they were in the afternoon, the old woman spinning her flax, the boy peeling withes to make baskets. There was a fire of pine roots on the hearth, the only light in the hut.

The woman seized a lighted knot, and held it high above her head, illuminating with a red glare the black rafters and stone walls of the cottage as Sir Reginald entered.

"Ha!" said she, "it is you. I expected you would come, and I am glad you have; although your crime is black, your heart is not, and I would like to see if you'll ever have a chance to do as much good as you've done evil. Go, Tom," continued she, addressing the boy, "and cut some pine knots for to-morrow. Take one of the sausages to make you think the time short, and don't come back till I call you."

The boy started up, took a huge sausage from a string of such delectable viands, hung inside of the wide chimney, and lifting an axe, shouldered it, and left the hut, whistling as he went.

"Come now," said the old woman; "if you want to have your fortune told clearly in the middle of that ring."

As she spoke she pointed to a circle on the earthen flooring of the hut, evidently made for the purpose of her incantations.

Sir Reginald did as he was bid, at the same time feeling heartily ashamed of having come to the hut. Yet, as before, a spell seemed to hold him to the place, the black eyes of the old woman fascinating him as if they were those of the fabled snake.

The weird woman now took from her pocket a crystal, which sparkled with the light of a diamond, its rays shooting out in a circle, and illuminating the place where she stood, although partly imbedded in the stone in which it was found.

Putting the crystal in Sir Reginald's hand, she said:

"Ask now for what ye want to know."

"Tell me something about my wife."

The old woman peered closely into the crystal, and then replied, speaking rapidly:

"I told you in the morning that your wife would die before a year was out, but I was wrong. She has lines of great grief in her hand, and I was not willing to tell her the weary, wandering life she'll have. Before you are a year married you'll have a son who'll be your spoilt plaything for five years, and then 'll come the time you have most to fear of all your life; there is a great danger about you. If you pass that time in safety, you'll have a prosperous life, but it won't be a happy one. I can tell you no more."

The woman took the crystal from his hand as she spoke.

"If this is all you have to tell, I came here, almost in the midnight, for nothing."

"What would you have?" asked the old woman, with a scowling, suspicious look, not very flattering to the young man.

"I want you to tell me where my nearest kinsman is, and what he is doing at this very moment."

"Your nearest kinsman," she repeated, peering inquisitively into his eyes.

"Yes, my next of kin," he answered, hastily, provoked by his own weakness in coming there, as well as by the supercilious, saucy way in which the old woman spoke. "I want to test your power," said he. "I know where my next of kin is and what he is doing, and I wish to find whether you can tell the truth."

"Ha!" said the old woman, suddenly changing her manner, and speaking as if she were under the influence of a sudden spell.

"The fit is on me now, and I'll tell ye that, and maybe more than ye'll like to hear. Follow me to the spring," said she as she suddenly left the hut.

The young man saw with surprise that the moon

was high in the heavens, and he must have passed more time than he had reckoned on in the woman's hut.

All around the spring was flooded by the moonlight, as bright as day, showing the black, jagged rock from which the water flowed, the ferns and primroses among the grass, even the dark green pines and tasselled larches overhead, as clearly as if the sun shone on them.

The woman now took the crystal, and, holding it under the spring till it was quite wet, put it again into Sir Reginald's hand, saying to him as she did so: "Call aloud the words that I say to you: 'Come here to me, my next of kin.'"

"Come here to me, my next of kin," Sir Reginald repeated, in tones which rang loud and clear in the silent night.

The woman bent her ear above the crystal as he spoke.

"Ha!" exclaimed she, "it is a woman's voice that answers, and she says, in soft tones, 'Who called me?' She is dressed in velvet and gems. She is a beautiful woman. I think too old to be your sister, and not old enough to be your mother. She is in a large company of ladies and gentlemen, dressed as finely as herself."

The young man laughed with a sarcastic, yet pleased air, as he said:

"Now I know you have no occult power at all; I know no such person; I have no female relative on earth."

"Well," replied the woman, "if you doubt my power, there is no use in standing here in the cold. Go ye your way with your crime-stained hand, and I'll go mine with a free conscience: maybe ye'll see the lady I have spoken of yet. When ye do, ye'll know her large sapphire ring on the first finger of her right hand. That ring she can never take off."

A sapphire ring on the first finger of her right hand! The young man started as she spoke.

The white hand—the sapphire ring—how could the woman know that? a thing that was a mystery to himself, a memory, only a memory. How it came he could not tell, the broken link of a dream—and yet one that came back to him everywhere and at all times. In the silence of his own chamber, in the festive hall, in converse with his fellow men—the broken memory—the white hand with the blazing sapphire ring—came with vivid, strong recollection for one moment; the next it was gone.

The woman had already turned from the spring, and was half-way to her hut when Sir Reginald called out:

"Come back! come back! I will give you another fee if you'll answer one question more."

The woman turned, sullenly scowling on him as she did so.

"You told me that I had committed a grave crime against another. I want to see the one I have so deeply injured."

"Call him then in your own words," was the woman's curt answer, as she again dipped the crystal in the clear water and placed it in his hand.

"Come here, mine enemy, the only one I hate and fear," Sir Reginald called out, in a loud voice.

"Hate and fear," an echo rang out, so close and so clear that both the knight and the old woman started and looked into each other's eyes.

The old woman was the first to recover herself, and, holding her ear above the crystal as before, she uttered:

"It is the voice of a man I hear now, and he says, 'Give me some wine,' and the sound of his voice is weak, almost to faintness."

She now looked into the crystal, holding Sir Reginald's hand so as to let the clear moonbeams fall upon the stone.

"What is it I see?" exclaimed the woman, in horrified accents; "a poor creature crouching in the corner of a dungeon, with long grizzled beard, and matted hair hanging over his shoulders; he is weak and ill, and now the poor man puts his tongue against the dungeon wall. He is dying of thirst, if not of hunger. An empty flagon is lying on its side not far from him, there are bits of mouldy, unwholesome-looking bread scattered about. Poor creature, he can be little cause of fear to any one."

She snatched the crystal with lightning quickness, dipped it in the water, and, again putting it in Sir Reginald's hand, peered down into its crystal depths as before.

"Ay! the poor man is there again, he is resting now and panting with the exertion it gave him to suck the dungeon walls for drink. He is clutching the skins among which he sits, and trying to cover and keep warm his shivering limbs. Ah! there is a blood-red cloud descending from the roof of the dungeon; it is creeping, creeping, slowly but surely, down on the grizzled, matted head of the poor victim whose restless, wolf-like eyes seem to know and dread its coming."

The woman looked into the knight's face with scowling, reproachful eyes as she said:

"Young man, if ye would not have the red crime of murder added to the black sin-stain already on your palm, ye will not slack horses' speed nor engine's smart till ye reach the place where that poor creature is famishing in his dungeon."

CHAPTER II.

This castle hath a pleasant seat: the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses. *Shakespeare.*

The woman called to the boy, and both were inside the cottage and the door was shut, leaving Sir Reginald Trevillian standing by the spring, his face white as ashes, and trembling with horror at the picture the weird woman had exhibited to him.

"I fear that woman has seen but too clearly what is stern reality. 'Varily there are more things in Heaven and earth than our philosophy dreams of,' colloquially he, as he retraced his steps toward the village inn. 'Yet how is it possible he could want water already? I gave him a supply sufficient for eight days, and I have only been gone four—the empty pitcher lying on its side—it must have been thrown down by accident, or perhaps in one of his mad rages he has kicked it and so split the water, and it may be his own life with it; Heaven grant it may not be so. I shall not rest a moment until I see for myself what has happened. May Heaven in its mercy forbid that the crime of murder be added to the one that lies so heavy on my soul."

"He must not die of hunger or thirst either!" exclaimed the young man, with passionate earnestness. "Heaven knows I have great need to wish for his death and the relief it would bring me—but it must come of itself, some by the decay of nature—not by any want I can supply—not from any negligence of mine—my crime is too awful without that. And yet if deep repentance, bitter self-conviction by night and by day can atone for evil, surely my penance has been most signal. Were it possible, how gladly would I set him out on the green sward under the blue skies of Heaven; but it is impossible, there is no corner on this earth far enough away to which I could fly from the vengeance of that fiend."

"No! the first breath of fresh air to him, the first warm gleam from Heaven's sunshine would to me be a felon's dock—a felon's doom—while every man and woman in Christendom would lift their hands and eyes in holy horror at my unnatural crime. Mea would call out, 'To the rope with him, hanging is too good for such a man,' and women, with their soft voices, would repeat the words with shudder and sigh."

"And yet, oh, Heaven! how it was forced on me! how I was goaded on to it day by day, hour by hour; in my childhood, in my youth, down-trodden by a misery unknown to slavery; and then, on a sudden, the horrible temptation came and I was forced to it; yes, forced. None but the angels and the stars, those old watchers, know how pure and holy my heart was until that sad hour. True, there was a choice left me, it is mine yet, but, oh, Heavens! it is too horrible to contemplate."

The young man stayed his footsteps, covering his eyes with both hands as if he would shut out some scene of inexpressible horror from his gaze.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed he, in louder accents than before, "nature would not submit to such an unheard-of sacrifice then; it is impossible now. Even if this troubled conscience were to goad me on to such an act of self-immolation, my love for Ethel would withhold me. The fiend would tear her limb from limb, or, worse still, wear her life blood out in single drops!"

Sir Reginald reached the door of the village inn, and sounded a loud peal on the knocker. The door was opened by the landlord himself, who, having been aroused from his slumbers, presented himself in a half-clad condition.

"Is it you, Sir Reginald? I thought you were in bed hours ago."

"No; I have been out on the hills, and have unexpectedly received news which must hurry me to the nearest railway station. It is, I know, twelve miles from here. Can you give me a pair of horses at once? My wife will be barely able to dress in time to catch the train."

"Yes. You can have horses, and good ones too," replied the landlord, "but it is too bad to disturb the young lady at this hour in the morning."

"So it is," was the reply, "but the occasion admits of no delay."

In half an hour Sir Reginald Trevillian and his bride are hurrying on as fast as horses' feet can carry them towards the Benington railway station.

Ere the shades of evening closed in they have left the railway, and amid the crimson cushions of Sir Reginald's own carriage, which he has telegraphed for, are nearing his own castled home, the frowning

walls and buttresses of which are in sight, towering half-way up the rocky height on which it is built.

Lady Trevelyan's eyes eagerly scanned the landscape of hill and dale, river and lake, surrounding the old castle which was now to be her home.

"What a charming place!" she exclaimed, as she looked with sparkling eyes all around from the open carriage; "such steep hills, wooded to the top with dark fir and pines, and those grand old oaks and elms that line the road on each side, they seem the very giants of their race. Oh! that romantic-looking old castle, and the clear, beautiful lake, it seems to realize all the dreams of my girlhood. It will be perfect happiness to be mistress of this beautiful place."

"It will be happiness for me," said Sir Reginald, taking her hand fondly as he spoke, "to have you as its mistress. I have never known what it was to be too happy within its walls as yet."

"Why?" exclaimed Lady Trevelyan, looking anxiously in her husband's face.

"I cannot exactly tell," was the reply; "perhaps because 'it is not good for man to be alone.'"

A turn of the road now brought them to quite a near side view of the castle, disclosing to their eyes an octagon tower, which, separated by a few feet from the main building at the top, seemed to have its foundation in the lake.

"What a strange-looking tower that is!" exclaimed Ethel, a feeling of dread creeping over her, as she looked at the eerie place. "What is it for? Surely there are no dwellings-rooms there."

"Not exactly," replied her husband; "it was in the old feudal times used as a flag-staff tower, the room under the roof, from which the flag-staff was mounted, and the one underneath, both of which are very lofty, being the armory of the castle."

"It seems built in the lake," said the young lady. "I should think the damp would creep up and rust the arms."

"It is built almost in the lake," was her husband's reply; "that is to say, its foundation is a rock, so close to the margin that the walls on one side are nearly always wet by the waters of the lake. It is an eerie place; don't look at it any longer, Ethel, it is by no means suggestive of the feelings I should wish to reign in your heart as you enter your new home."

A quick sweep of the carriage whirled them away from the lake view; a moment more they were in the drive, up at the great door, and Ethel was lifted by her husband from the carriage out on to the steps of the portico, where the servants were all ranged to welcome their future mistress.

The housekeeper, an old woman who had reigned supreme in Trevelyan Castle for the last twenty years, came forward, dressed in her best silk dress and quilted apron, to do obeisance to her future lady.

"You're welcome home, my lady," was said, in hearty tones by herself and the other domestics.

Sir Reginald consigned his bride to the care of the housekeeper, that she might be taken to her own apartment, there to rest and dress for dinner, while he himself sought his own dressing-room ostensibly for the same purpose.

Entering his dressing-room, a handsomely fitted chamber on the side of the castle next the square tower already referred to, Sir Reginald at once opened a wardrobe, which from its size as well as the beauty of the wood and carving was the most conspicuous article of furniture in the room.

The left wing of the wardrobe, the one he opened, was wholly unoccupied, except by a few stone bottles and biscuit boxes on the shelf almost at the top, so high that the young man had to reach above his head as he took down two of the bottles and a box of biscuits.

One of the former was an empty water flask, the other filled with wine.

The empty flask he filled from a water-tap in the basin stand, and then attaching a cord many yards in length to each of the bottles and the box, he lighted a dark lantern, and laden with the bottles, box and lantern, touched a secret spring in the back of the wardrobe.

At his touch a panel flew back, disclosing a narrow stone staircase, winding down in the direction of the tower.

On reaching the third step he pulled the secret door into its own place, and then took his way down the flight of narrow stone steps, of which he passed over a hundred before he reached the bottom.

Arrived there, the scene shown by the flitting light of the dark lantern was somewhat curious, and would have been appalling to one less used to the sight than Sir Reginald Trevelyan.

Six years before, when he first saw it, the sight made his young blood curdle, his flesh shrink and shiver.

Within two or three feet of the last step was a dead wall forming one of the octagons in the tower, in the middle of which was placed a narrow iron

gate, through the grated bars of which might be seen, by the light of the dark lantern as it flashed to and fro, a deep dungeon beyond. In two rows down the middle of the dungeon were seven massive gothic pillars, in each of which were iron rings, and to several of these last were attached heavy chains, red with rust.

Sir Reginald flashed his light so as to penetrate through the grated door to the innermost corner of the dungeon.

And as he did so it was with a feeling of relief almost akin to joy that he heard these words:

"Give me some wine," uttered by a wolfish-looking creature with grizzled beard and matted elf locks, who crouched on a pile of deer and sheepskins in the corner of the dungeon, to which he had flashed his light.

"I will," was the quick reply; "come to the wall; I have wine and bread and water for you here. Come to the side of the wall; I will be at the top of the ladder in a moment."

The young man turned quickly to a ladder, which, placed a little way from the gate, reached an aperture at the very top of the lofty wall, large enough to admit of the flask and biscuit-box being lowered down by means of a cord to the captive below.

The poor creature seized the wine first, and putting the flask to his mouth took a deep draught, and then said, in weak but bitter accents:

"I thought you had determined to starve me."

"You need not fear that," was the reply. "I told you years ago that I would do everything to keep you in life, except giving you your liberty."

"And you perform your promise well when you bring me bread and water once in four days."

"I brought you enough of both to last for eight days. What has become of it?"

"I have tasted no water for the last three days," said the captive, in the same harsh, bitter tones as before. "That thing you left it in toppled over the day after you left here."

Sir Reginald flashed his light on the piles of skins, and with a feeling of awe saw the flask lying on its side exactly as the weird woman had described it.

"Have you brought home your bride?" the captive questioned.

"I have, as I told you, married Lord John Annesley's daughter. It is fortunate for you that I married one gentle and yielding as she is, otherwise you might have been left to perish with thirst, notwithstanding my promise. I left you water for eight days, and was not prepared that it should be thrown to the ground in one."

"Cease your clatter," was the reply of the captive, in a tone of authority. "Now that you have got a wife, are you willing to buy my secret? Remember, I tell you for the hundredth time it is one you would give all the lands and gold you now hold to know—one which will make you ten times a richer and more powerful man as soon as you know it. I will swear any oath you like to proffer, to leave British ground, to go to America, Australia, India, anywhere that I can breathe the fresh air, feel the sunshine on my withered limbs, and that you shall never hear of me again."

"No, it is impossible," was the response of the young man, uttered with a deep solemnity of tone; "you never kept your word to me in my childhood or my youth—I can have no faith in you now."

Sir Reginald Trevelyan was in his drawing-room introducing his beautiful bride to the guests assembled there.

Many times during that evening he looked on a beautiful hand, on the first finger of which sparkled a large sapphire.

There were mirth and feasting in the halls and drawing-rooms of Trevelyan Castle, beautiful ladies with their loves and gay lords mingling in the dance. The wine was red, the lamps were bright, and all went "merry as a marriage bell."

The man who was lord there six years before, whom the servants bowed down to, to whom the gold was paid, who ruled the land from the forest to the sea, was now lying on the damp floor of the dungeon under the octagon tower, gnashing his teeth and dashing his head against the stone walls in darkness and despair.

CHAPTER III.

Unnatural deeds

Do breed unnatural troubles. *Shakespeare.*

Six years have passed away, six years of dear happiness to Ethel Trevelyan; happy in her husband, happy in her child, beloved by her domestics and tenants, she wished for no more.

Is Sir Reginald a happy man? Far from it; he dearly loves his wife and child, his position is unexceptionable, yet his life is one of fear and unrest.

For ever haunted by the haggard face of the cap-

tive in the dungeon tower his life is one long penance. He must not leave his castle for more than a day lest the sight he encountered when he went to bring home his bride meets his eye again—a wolfish, hungry face, telling him that the last three days had been spent in misery, licking the dungeon walls with parched tongue, seeking drink.

It was evening in the early spring; Sir Reginald and Lady Trevelyan were to dine at a neighbouring castle, ten miles off. The carriage was at the door, waiting to convey them to their destination. Sir Reginald talked to the coachman about the harness—reminding him that the previous day some strap or buckle was loose. The man assured him that it was now all right. He had been very careful to have it so, as the way they were about to drive was a rough new-made road.

Sir Reginald had his overcoat on, but he entered the house that he might carry a flask of wine to the captive in the dungeon of the octagon tower before he left home.

The poor prisoner was evidently dying; Sir Reginald knew it—had known it for a week back, and, strange to say, it troubled him.

For the past week he had said to himself frequently:

"Would to Heaven that tyrannical man never had entered the dungeon tower. Oh! that my soul were free from this black crime."

A week before the miserable man for the first time complained of cold and weakness. He had lain twelve years in that dungeon and never before complained of either. He asked for warmer clothes, begged for brandy—begged for it in the name of Heaven! only one glass. It was given him every day, yet every day he became weaker and weaker.

That morning he was too weak to crawl to the wall where his food was let down—almost too weak to say in a faint voice, very different to the defiant tone in which he usually spoke:

"Lay it down; when I feel better I will go for it."

And when Sir Reginald flashed the light in the morning to the bottom of the wall he saw there the food and flask he had brought the former day lying untouched.

He was thinking of this as he took his way along the corridor to the dressing-room.

"Take me with you, papa."

Together with the words, his hand was clasped by his little son.

Sir Reginald looked at the beautiful boy whose fair young face was raised to his, the golden curls falling over his pretty dress of blue velvet and white lace, and he thought bitterly of the blood that flowed in the boy's veins, and shuddered as he thought that perhaps the captive he was going to feed might be lying cold on the dungeon floor.

And he wondered if it could be possible there would ever be half the enmity between himself and this boy that there had been every day of his life between the captive and him.

"Yes, you may come. Is mamma nearly ready?"

"No; her dress is not on yet. She bade me come to amuse you. Am I a good boy?"

"Oh, yes, a very good boy."

The father and his little son were now in the dressing-room. There was a bright fire burning in the grate, and a large, leather-covered easy-chair in front of the fireplace.

Sir Reginald lifted up the boy and placed him in the chair, saying:

"I must leave you for a few minutes; you will sit here till I come back?"

"Yes, papa."

There is a presage of evil in the man's heart, and he says:

"I think you had better go to your mamma. I'll ring for Dora."

And he laid his hand on the bell rope.

"Oh, no, papa!" the child pleaded. "Let Willie stay. I'll not move till you come back, not one bit."

"Well, I leave you, if you promise not to leave the chair, not for one moment."

His father was thinking of danger from fire.

"I won't—leave—the chair, not—for—one—moment."

The words were said with little pauses between each and many nods of the pretty little head.

Sir Reginald kissed the little red mouth and patted the golden head.

He went to the wardrobe, and, entering the left wing, lighted the dark lantern and shut the door of the wardrobe before he touched the spring.

The child's head was turned round and his eyes followed each movement of his father until the wardrobe door was shut.

The spring panel was opened and shut, Sir Reginald was descending the stone staircase, carrying both brandy and wine, his heart was heavy with foreboding of evil, and he said, aloud:

"I wish I had not left the child there; I feel as if I had kissed him for the last time."

He turned round to retrace his steps, and then he felt ashamed of such weakness and pursued his way. Why did he not heed the angel's warning? Why do we not all heed those warnings until it is too late and we have plunged into a life-sorrow?

He flashed the light through the grated door on to the place where the captive lay on his bed of skins. The poor victim was huddled up, his knees and head almost together, as if to keep himself warm.

Sir Reginald shivered, he felt the chill and damp of the dungeon as he had never done before. He flashed the light full on the face of the poor man. It was bent down, the beard sweeping his breast, the long, matted, grizzled hair falling on his shoulders was nearly all that could be seen.

"Great Heaven, he is dead!" exclaimed the young man, in bitter self-reproach; "and such a place to die in. Merciful Heaven, forgive me!"

There was a slight movement of the gray head. "Father! father! for Heaven's sake speak to me if you can!" rang through the dungeon in accents of wild entreaty.

A low groan, so weak as scarcely to be heard was the answer, the gray head and matted hair moving almost imperceptibly.

Sir Reginald put the lantern on the stone steps, and touching a spring in the iron gate it opened with a harsh, grating noise. In a moment he was beside the captive, trying to pour some wine from the flask he carried into the firmly compressed lips that seemed as if the teeth were set in death never to open more.

"Try to swallow this, father."

A deep, low sigh, as if from the parting spirit, was the only response.

The young man threw himself on his knees beside the captive and raised the heavy head and shoulders in his arms. The shut eyes half-unclosed and then the lids drooped heavily again. The face had lost its old fierceness of expression, the laboured breath came quick. His son saw that it was so and that the prematurely old man had only a few minutes to live.

"Father," he pleaded, in accents full of grief and repentance, "can you forgive me? You know I never meant all the evil I have been guilty of. Oh, father, say one word of forgiveness!"

The poor captive seemed trying to raise his arm, but it fell heavily on his side again, the mouth opened just a little—all the fierce look was gone.

Sir Reginald, by a strong effort, lifted the old man. He was very heavy, and it was only by exerting all his strength that his son could hold him up with one arm while with the other he tried to place the skins so as to support him. His breathing began to be harder and more laboured.

The captive lifted his right arm, and apparently with much difficulty placed it heavily on his son's shoulder. The skins were piled up, and Sir Reginald was about to place his father's head and shoulders upon them, when in a moment he was felled to the ground, his head dashed with force on an iron chain that lay coiled up in a rug by the side of the skins, and with two great leaps the old man was outside the iron gate, and it shut with a loud clang and a force which seemed to shake the dungeon to its foundation.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" the old man shouted out in strong, loud accents, as he jumped and leaped in front of the barred gate, "I forgive you heartily, my dear son. If you would like my blessing before I leave you to your meditations I'll give it with all my heart, and not only that but I'll return your kindness sevenfold."

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed with fiendish glee. "Any commands for the upper world? I'll do all your messages for you—not to-night—because I must wait here till your wife and family are in bed. This beard and matted head would frighten her ladyship."

Sir Reginald could not for the moment realize his position. His head was stunned by the blow on the iron chain, and it was some seconds before he was aware that the dying agonies of the old man had been enacted as a trap for himself, and that now he himself was the captive, most surely doomed for life, the grizzled, wolfish-looking, man leaping and shouting on the other side of the iron door, free—free as the wind or the sunshine.

The young man rose and stood with folded arms looking at the being before him, leaping and dancing in his mad glee; his own manhood too strong to permit him for one moment to betray the anguish of his soul.

He knew that for him all hope of liberty was lost. He well knew the inexorable character of his father—remembered but too clearly all the bitter persecution he himself had endured, and his soul was torn in mortal agony as he thought of the beautiful golden-haired boy he had left with such strong injunctions not to move until he came back.

He came back!—alas—alas!—the child would

grow to manhood and old age, and lie down to die, ere he would again see his father's face. And his wife, his beloved, fair wife!—what was to become of her?

"Don't be down-hearted. Although you have lost your knighthood and lady-love at one stroke," screamed and laughed the old man, snapping his fingers in fiendish delight, varying his amusement and giving himself a few moments' repose, by shooting out his tongue between the bars of the grated door, "I'll take care of the young lady, there's no fear of her. I was always fond of the fair sex."

"Scoundrel!" burst out the young man in accents, of thunder, which echoed and re-echoed through the vaulted dungeon.

"I'll make my programme safe enough. I'll not leave this till midnight. I know the way to leave my own house so that no one will see or hear me; and when I come back I'll be clothed as becomes my rank, and with the help of a barber I hope to regain my old face again. And now, don't trouble yourself with hopes of getting out of that hole. For twelve years, every day of which is scored on that pillar close to your elbow, I have been trying to find a way to open this gate from the inside. It cannot be done."

"I brought all the science I learnt at school—ten times more than ever you learnt, I took care of that—all the knowledge I am master of, and as much patience as Job ever exercised, all to bear on this one thing, and it cannot be done. It was only when all this utterly failed that I tried the ruse which got me out and you in, and in you shall be till your body rots there. And, mind, don't be too extravagant with your food or your drink either. I'll not trouble myself to come to this cold hole to feed you every day; so you may find yourself starving if you don't be economical. It's cold out here without my skins."

He stopped a few minutes as if waiting for an answer, and then continued:

"By-the-by, you'd better be careful of your skins, you'll get no more, not half an inch, and as I'm tiring of being down here I'd better tell you all I think of now—you know I'm not always in a communicative mood. In the first place, then, I won't be back here for a week, perhaps not then; the flasks that are below the hole, where they were put by yourself, are empty, and were put there for a decoy; so, for your week's food, you have what you brought to-night and some mouldy bread."

The strong young man groaned in spirit. He knew well the inhuman fiend now let loose on his defenceless wife and child was able to do all he threatened. The groans and tears of his innocent child, the life-blood dropping from his pure wife's heart would be mirth and music in the ears of their tormentor.

(To be continued.)

THE SWEET SISTERS OF INCHVARRA; OR, THE VAMPIRE OF THE GUILLAMORES.

CHAPTER XXXII.

KENELM stopped to wipe the perspiration from his brow; the ladies uttered a long-drawn sigh of horror. Kathleen's face was pale, her eyes glittering, and when she spoke it was with something of the accent which still returned to her in moments of intense excitement.

"Heaven be good, then! Mr. Kenelm, what is it all? My name's Guillamore, and our far-way ancestor was known by the name of Jules Guillamore. Me own brother Shane an' me self were driven out of our home last September by a band of the White Byes, headed by a man as like your description of Captain Blaze as two peas, an' sure didn't they burn the cabin over our heads, an' stand with drawn pistols watchin' for us to come out like singed rats an' be shot! An' all because the stranger put them up—our own neighbours—to thinkin' me poor Shane a traitor!"

"So!" exclaimed Kenelm in deep astonishment, "you are a kinswoman of mine, my brave little nurse, and this is another link in the plot discovered! All those who bore the name were to be destroyed! And how did you escape?"

Recovering her composure by an effort, Kathleen gave an outline of the rest of her history.

"Strange!" said Kenelm, taking her hand tenderly in his thin palm. "Aileen is gone, Shane is gone, Vara is gone, Denis is gone, and only you and I are left! Shall we make common cause against the enemy?"

Here Signorina Corilla rose and took the sick man's other hand with an uncontrollable impulse.

"Don't you know me, Kenelm? Did you never guess that I ran away because I thought you scorned

to wed, though you did not scorn to love me? Is'ten years ago—ten long years—but don't you know me yet? I never forgot you, dear—never, never!"

"What—Muriel Armar?" ejaculated Guillamore, gazing at her, while a flush mounted to his forehead. "My old love!" he whispered; "and unmarrried yet?"

"Who has such a right to help you as I?" she sobbed. "You would not have forsaken your home and family but for my folly, and this ruin might have never come to pass!"

Well, of course the signorina engaged the most eminent of detectives, with a host of satellites about him, to search for the vanished archduchess and her victim. And she advertised in all the English and Parisian papers of note for the Marquis of Winstanley, and as yet that was all she could do.

Some days passed when a totally unexpected event for Kathleen occurred.

She was summoned from Kenelm's bedside one morning to see a man who was waiting in the ante-chamber.

Entering very indifferently she beheld a handsome young fellow of bronzed visage, with a new suit of black clothes on and a thick gold chain dangling at his vest front.

The young lady looked—looked again—grew scarlet, and darting forward flung her arms round his neck in a choking embrace, while, both laughing and crying, she shrieked:

"Sure it's never Shane, me own darling?"

"Is this Kathy?" faltered he, in a wavering voice.

"Yes—yes, it's Kathy," returned she, wildly, "and, ah, spake again, core of me heart, for it's hungered I've been for the lack of ye! Is it you, Shane—Shane? Ooh, sure, hold me, me owl, or I'll die with the joy!"

Her head sank on his shoulder—her breath ceased. Shane sat down with her in his arms and soon squeezed her back to consciousness.

"How awate you look, Kathy mavourneen!" said he, at last.

"And how well you look, Shane, my dear; you that I thought was gone for ever!" returned Kathy. "An' how did ye find me out at all?"

So Shane told all his adventures by sea and land (and you may imagine Kathleen's interest when Aileen Guillamore was introduced); and finally told that they had just arrived with the "Princess Louise" a week or so before at Queenstown, where Shane's inquiries after his sister had been so far successful that he had been sent by the Arnars to London to find her with the famous prima donna.

The adventures of Captain Sherrard and Shane since last we parted from them may be briefly recapitulated thus:

Their fury and disappointment when they discovered that Rochester had actually slipped off the steamer at the last moment with Aileen were so poignant that they struck awe to the hearts of the beholders. Sherrard wanted to land at Samba' Point and tramp back to Halifax, but the captain of the mail steamer was inexorable.

When they had been some days out Sherrard unexpectedly fell in with the Spanish Moor who had been Aileen's attendant, lying on the deck, the very picture of death.

Sherrard pounced upon her with a howl of vengeance; she electrified him by denouncing Rochester and his treachery with a blaze of the eyes and storm of anger that left no room to doubt her sincerity. She farther proved her gratitude to Aileen for nursing her through the yellow fever by relating everything connected with Aileen's abduction, from the time Rochester had snatched her from Vara's side in the old rose-garden of Inchvarra to the present date, in which she showed her listener a card found on the pillow of her berth the first night they were out, on which Rochester had written in pencil:

"Can do better without you. Go to London as soon as you arrive, and stay on board the 'La Croce,' which now lies at the docks. Wait there until we join you. ROCHESTER."

"It is there you shall trap the villain," said Zolande, with flashing eyes. "Only have patience."

The captain was now in London, keeping an eye on the yacht "La Croce," and in league with Zolande to overhaul the pseudo man and wife as soon as they should set foot on English ground.

When the brother and sister had finished detailing their several experiences to each other, and when Kathleen had farther disclosed the strange facts in connection with the Guillamores history, they were both profoundly struck with two or three points of similarity in their several adventures.

First: Shane had fallen in with a lady bearing his own name, and proven to be a kinswoman. Kathleen had met with that lady's brother.

Second: Both brother and sister were under the power of enemies who were evidently acting in concert.

Third; Shane and Katy had suffered from unknown ills, proven to be the same.

The simple souls were quite awe-stricken as they compared notes. Of course they could make very little of it; but each cried, quoting their particular divinities:

"Let us tell Captain Sherrard."

"Let us tell Miss Muriel."

So off went Shane to fetch Sherrard to make the acquaintance of these new friends.

The meeting of Kenelm Guillamore and Sherrard was somewhat peculiar.

Said Signorina Corilla, leading in the jolly seadog, with a beam of the eyes:

"Dear Kenelm, here is a gentleman who can tell you news of one of your sisters."

Kenelm, sitting in an invalid's chair, wrapped in a dressing-gown, and gaunt as any ghost, said:

"What do you know about Vara? Have you seen her?"

Captain Sherrard, standing staring, rejoined:

"Bless my eyes! Has he been fed on cucumber pickles and vinegar bitters for the last ten years? What's the matter, sir? Why don't ye take a sea voyage? By thunder! a good-sized bellows would blow ye away!"

"Is Vara still alive? Excuse my impatience, sir, but she has been in such perilous circumstances."

"Vara? Never clapped eyes on her, Mr.—er—Guillamore. By George! to think of a paper knife like that being brother to my plump little rosy Yellow Hair!"

"Ah, that's Aileen! that's little Aileen! For Heaven's sake, sir, where is she? I would give this right hand to hear of my two sweet sisters!"

"Tain't much to give anyway, but I'll take it and shake it, too, with a downright good will. Well, Mr. Guillamore, I left Miss Aileen alive and well about eighteen days ago—"

"Heaven be praised!"

"Belay that, will ye?—at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on the wharf of the Allan line of mail steamers, and claimed as wife of a confounded rascal, who's going to get a good kicking one of these days, called Geoffrey Rochester."

"Rochester!"

"Ay, Rochester; a pup who carried her off from her sister's very side at Inchvarra, and drugged her on board his yacht and got some hedge preacher to make-believe marry 'em, while she was senseless, as if in any Christian land that would be held marriage! Man alive; if ever the little angel is a-nigh me again—"

"Rochester! Muriel, I remember now! That was the name of the man who exposed Christabel Snowe at Malta! Can he be plotting against her?"

"Be calm, dear friend. Captain Sherrard has much to say yet."

"Yes, yes. He tried to force my little sister to marry him!"

"That did he, but she was pluck to the backbone. He put her in the lighthouse off Sharkness where, as good luck would have it, I lost the poor old ship, and was saved with the crew. As soon as she got me to take in the way the land lay off she skeddaddled in the lighthouse-keepers boat—were chased by Rochester in his yacht—got picked up by a troop-steamers going to the Colonies, and so got out to Halifax. There we had just agreed to make a mess of Rochester by marrying each other, when the beast turned up, and put such a black face on the matter that—look here, stranger, d'ye think you've got 'go' enough in that shadder of a fist of yours to punch my thick head?"

"Go on, sir—go on. What become of my poor sister?"

"I'm ashamed to tell you, Kenelm Guillamore! jealous idiot that I was!"

"What? You surely did not—"

"Yes, that I did, and haven't I hated myself every day since? I got blind and besotted with jealousy, and handed the poor little darling who trusted me back to the villain—"

Here he stopped short, and a most alarming manifestation took place. His large face grew redder and redder, his mouthed lip moved with what would have been called a hysterical quiver in a woman—a vast, choking sigh lifted his Cyclopean chest—then down came his head on the arm of Kenelm's chair, and a sob of grief tore from the honest fellow's very heart.

The white, weak hand of the invalid sought his, and found it, and held it in a nervous grasp.

"Yes, I understand," said Kenelm, soothingly. "Jealousy in such a case was cruel, but natural—natural!"

"And in spite of all, if she loves you, she will be true to you," exclaimed the prima donna, with her tear-bowed eyes flashing.

"And love you all the better for your jealousy!" added little Katy.

Sherrard looked from one to the other of these sweet girls, and wistfully listened to their woman's wisdom as though it had been the oracles of old.

Then a gleam of pleasure lit his dark eye, and he plumped back into his story.

"I hadn't let the fellow well out of my sight with her when Shane managed to make me understand what a noodle I was, so we lay in wait to get her back again. We found out by looking over the list of passengers taken for Liverpool in the 'Princess Louise' that 'G. Rochester and wife' were booked to go. So down we went to the wharf and waited until we saw my cove being led on board in a decidedly damaged condition, and little Yellow Hair, as sweet as a rose, and defiant as a briar, watching for us. Of course, we thought all was safe and got on board too. But didn't the miserable fox jest lay that trap for us to walk into? Off he sneaked as soon as we were hid out of sight, dragging the little 'un with him. But I ain't afraid much! No, not by George! That little girl has enough in her to fire a powder-magazine! His slave-woman, who used to be a bit of a favourite once, I fancy, was sacked off in the steamer, and felt so mad at the bolting-off trick that she turned tail on him, and informed me of everything. And, what d'ye think, sir, of the little bit of pluck—no bigger than that, ladies! and as slender as—well, as a bottle of claret—pricking the brute when he made himself too much at home with the Spanish woman's dagger (about as big as a bodkin), until he roared blue murder, and had to be helped about like a sick baby, in the damaged condition in which I last saw the beggar? Ha! ha! ha! It's the comfort of my life—it's oil to my bones to think of that! But that's not the end of the story. I believe I've got my thumb on Rochester as soon as he gets back to England. It appears that the yacht (which isn't his, but belongs to somebody else) now lies at a certain dock in the Thames. My hotel is close to that dock; the Spanish woman was ordered to wait on the yacht until they arrived. She's to tip me the wink when that happens, and then I'll go for 'em hot and heavy. D'ye see?"

This eccentric tale had a wonderful effect on the sick man. It was like a draught of new life. Aileen, though in a strange and perilous situation, was safe as far as her life was concerned, and might soon be rescued.

But this was not all.

Captain Sherrard soon began to tell another story, which he declared was a burden to his mind. It was one which the reader may have forgotten, but which has a most important bearing upon the plot, namely: Mademoiselle de Fleury's history to Aileen.

He told about the French estate of Clairmarais; of the hunting for heirs; of the appearance of an Irish steward of an Irish family in answer to the call; of the two young girls, descendants of Jules de Clairmarais, the Huguenot, being named as sole heirs; of the assassin who killed the French steward and took possession of the Château Gracedieu in the name of Vara Guillamore the sole survivor.

That was the copestone of the gigantic structure of revelation.

Captain Blaze beyond a doubt was the assassin.

Madame Blaze had determined to obtain possession of the Clairmarais estates which were going about begging for heirs.

For this purpose she had seized all the Guillamores by a stupendous system of guile, and doubtless intended to remove them out of her path one by one, until only one remained. Only one?

Was Rochester her tool, and was Aileen, the simple-hearted, to be the survivor so that she might sign all her possessions away to him?

Impossible for conjecture.

Fourteen days after the grand spectacular drama of "Archduchess Feodora's" departure a phlegmatic-looking person penetrated with something of the quiet but telling effect of fork-lightning into the circle of friends.

He was Detective Bolt, and carried tidings.

Had arrested the Count de St. Cyr coming off the Calais boat at Dover. Great rogue that—suspected as a poisoner in London twenty years ago. Scared to death—had made a clean breast of it. Was hired by woman, known here as Mrs. St. Columb, to wipe out Mr. Kenelm Guillamore by gradual arsenics; couldn't put it through for a nurse that popped into his way just at the last. He toddled off to employer who was now at the village Perancho near Calais, France, with 't'other victim, and told her the thing had been accomplished as far as he was concerned. Had found St. Columb woman nursing young lady as fast as she could into her new suit of clothes.

How was she?

Not expected to live that night.

(To be continued.)

THE sword of the late Latour d'Auvergne, "premier Grenadier de France," has been left by

his nephew, lately deceased, to Garibaldi. The French press expresses a hope that some means may be taken for preventing its departure from France, so that it may remain as an heirloom in the country.

WHEN THE SHIP COMES HOME.

CHAPTER XXIII.

His proud lip was pressed as if with pain.

He trod less firmly; and his restless eye

Glanced forward frequently, as if some ill

He dared not meet were there. WILLIE.

THE answer Ellen gave her brother was satisfactory. The secret was told to him, and he promised to respect it as belonging purely to Frank and himself, until such time as one or the other thought fit that he should divulge it.

There was a great moral change in Mr. Edward Temple when he was in his sister's house, a change that made itself apparent throughout his stay. The scornfully bantering tone was gone; he was gentle and earnest, and very affectionate, and he watched her movements with a glance of admiration, and, like Amy, could not eulogize too much the design of the house and beauty of the grounds.

They stayed until nearly eight o'clock, but Francis did not return, and Edward proposed to take his leave, promising to come again on the third day from now.

During the few quiet hours spent at the Sydenham villa Edward had spoken a good deal of his own plans.

"Myself and companions had two or three lucky hits," he said, "in the silver mines. Once we bought a pocket of two trier-out and disatisfied Yankees. We gave them three hundred dollars for it, and after four days' hard work made between us over half a million dollars. We did not spend it, as Californians used to, but conveyed our wealth to a city of one of the States and converted it into safe capital with good interest. I could lay my hands on twenty thousand pounds now, so we need not trouble about Amy's future. I shall let the old house, and place mother and Amy in a cheerful, well-furnished villa somewhere a little way out of town. I have no doubt but the Temples would receive me gladly enough now that I am independent of them. I shall not make myself too cheap; at the same time, as I want a position that would put me on something like an equal footing with the Hoptowns, I shall not hold myself aloof from our people; nothing is gained by family feuds, and I am sure they would gladly bury the hatchet."

Ellen was thankful for this promised change in her mother's affairs. At best it was painful at any time, doubly painful now, to be under so much obligation to Charles Ruhl.

"You will come in three days?" she asked.

"Come to dinner. I invite you in Frank's name."

She did so in the full belief that from what Frank had said it would please him. He did not return that night, and she was somewhat sorry, for she longed to tell him of her brother and how strangely they had met.

She told him the next day, and did not notice in her eagerness how ill and worn he looked until the little incident was finished, Edward eulogized upon, and his brilliant circumstances explained.

Then she saw how haggard he was, how faintly he smiled, in spite of an attempt to be cheerful.

"Frank, darling, what is the matter?"

Her heart was beating aloud with alarm in an instant, and showed itself in her sweet face.

"Nothing, Nell; only a little extra fatigue. Mar and his mother and her people, you know, annoy me. I hate being with them."

"But, dearest, even that should not make you look so ill, so worn."

"I am tired, pet, and a little worried. At the eleventh hour there is a doubt about John; many of his old friends will not accept him because he cannot remember incidents in which he was mixed up with them."

"But, dear Frank, you cannot surely expect one man's memory to be equal to the memory of forty or fifty people."

"True, Nell, that is very sensible. He is not the kind of fellow to give in, though, very easily. He is a Hoptown in that at times, though I almost doubt him."

"That is very strange, Frank. Do you know I think you ought to see Ned."

"Why?"

"He said your cousin was his lost friend when he started for England."

"Who started for England?"

"John Hoptown."

"That is indeed strange. Nell, my pet, I want a couple of days' rest, so shall remain at home and see him."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, darling! I do feel so unhappy when you are away."

Frank sighed.

Ellen heard it, but made no comment. Her loving heart told her that out of kindness, perhaps, he was

keeping some trouble from her, some unhappy secret that he feared to tell.

During the two days he let a word drop now and then that put her on the alert, and her soul thrilled with horror when this horrible suspicion came upon her.

"Frank," she said, "you fear some trouble when you come of age?"

"Yes, Nell, that is the secret. It is reported that I am married. Worse still, they intend to try and place a restraint upon my actions, as not being capable of being master of my fortune."

"The villains!"

"Yes, Nell, and John Hopetown, as the next heir, is with them. He is the party most interested. Oh, Heavens! can it be possible?" he exclaimed, wildly, "that I have done things that some people would consider the actions of the insane? Can it be possible that I have a mental affliction and do not know it? What should I do, and you—and you?"

Ellen wound her arms round his neck and kissed him fondly.

"If Heaven had ordained that such an affliction should fall upon you I would never, never leave you. Day or night every footstep of yours should be accompanied by mine, every wish anticipated and gratified. You would be in my heart and mind always, always, and I would love you still, oh, so tenderly, and pray Heaven to give me strength and health to be ever at your call!"

Tears were rolling down her cheeks. He felt them drop, drop upon his head—warm and heavy, and he clasped her to him as something quite, quite priceless.

"There would be no whimsy, no irritability, no frown or ungratified word from you should ever be resented. In poverty and in misfortune I should be yours always, always. But it is not so, my darling, it is not so. They cannot—they shall not—make it so while I have strength and Edward has strength and money to defend you."

"Heaven bless you, Nell! I am sure you are sincere," said Frank, fervently.

And so she dried her eyes and they walked out in the glorious little garden of theirs, walked arm in arm, plucking fresh dew-burdened roses and exchanging their own kisses and lovers' smiles.

Edward was coming soon and a little extra attention was paid to the dinner. Everything was to be done that could be done to show that he was welcome, that he was wanted here.

"For I feel that I am going to welcome a dear old friend," smiled Frank. "I fancy that I know him quite well, and shall say 'Ned' before dinner is over."

And so he did. Edward Temple came, not presuming and boisterous, like a man who claims a privilege because it is a sister's house, but quietly, dressed in evening suit and white gloves, daintily booted and perfumed and with a white rose in his buttonhole. He arrived in a hired carriage which was soon dismissed.

Hopetown, who always dined in full dress from habit, was waiting for him with Ellen in the drawing-room.

"Mr. Temple," announced Cottell.

Edward walked in, and the door was closed behind him.

He walked straight up to Ellen as the lady of the house and kissed her as his sister.

"Frank—my brother; Edward—this is my dear Frank."

The two young men faced about, grasped hands, and in the moments of silence which followed took stock of each other, and what did they see? Edward saw a fair young face, full of poetry and sincerity, an elegant figure, a bright, somewhat mournful and truthful eye, and a smile that at once invited confidence.

And Frank, he saw a young man with a broad, sunburnt, intellectual face, a powerful physique, honest, unfinishing eyes, and a frank, hearty smile; a man full of stern justice and honesty of purpose, a strong friend, who would fight the battle of right with a hand and a will of iron.

"Mr. Temple—Edward, I receive you gladly. I hope we shall be friends."

"My dear Frank, how cordially I reciprocate your feelings I cannot find language to express."

A hearty English shake of the hands and then they turned with one accord towards Ellen. How much she approved of this meeting could be seen in the gladdened flush on her face, the brighter glitter of her lustrous eyes and the smile that was almost radiant.

"I will leave you two for a few moments," she said; "gentlemen always get along better at first by themselves."

They entered into conversation, not like men who had met for the first time, but like old friends. Edward admired the house and grounds and situation, spoke affectionately of the old country and its people, drifted into a few of his own travels, and mentioned the singular fact of having met John Hopetown in Canada.

"Poor John! he did not know then that his father had forgiven him," said Frank.

"Pardon me, I think he did. He must have learnt it from some foreign paper, but he had a sad way of referring to it. He did not care to come back he said, and enjoy the splendid property the possession of which would perhaps have saved his dear young wife's life. He had no love for the money; forgiveness had come too late, and he declared that he never would seek nor accept it."

"What was he like then?" asked Frank, whose vague doubts made him curious.

"A tall, powerful, handsome man, brought down by a deadly sorrow to emaciation and almost mental aberration, whose terrible and irrepairable losses were ever uppermost in his mind, whose heart was wholly wrecked by the breaking of every fond tie that makes life worth living for. A man who had but one craving, one insatiable yearning, and that for rest—eternal rest, even to the contemplation of suicide."

"Poor John!" said Frank, with a shudder; "he must have suffered terribly."

"He did; and but for his love of solitude, of wandering from place to place alone, I should have accompanied him home. But he begged me not; he told me he would so very much rather be alone, in such a way that it would have been sheer cold-heartedness to have accompanied him."

"Strange—very strange," mused Frank, audibly. "And so different now."

"I have heard he is so different now, morally and physically."

"You have seen him?"

"No, and I have kept my knowledge a secret from all save you and Nell."

"Why?"

"I don't know; presentiment, warning, anything you like, but as soon as I heard how things were here, how John Hopetown had turned up, and about all what he was doing, I inwardly felt a strange reluctance to say anything until I saw him—especially to Ruhl. You must let me meet John without him knowing that I am going to be present."

"A strange whim," smiled Frank, "but I will do it."

Ellen came in then and dinner was announced. It was an excellent though plain dinner with a charming dessert and some splendid wines. Ellen was bright-hearted and brilliant, and Frank cheered up so that his face was flushed like a woman's.

Conversation turned upon cheerful subjects. Edward told some of his Canadian experiences and Frank was overflowing with pleasant anecdotes of travel, and at times the two young men laughed loudly, though not immoderately or vulgarly.

When dinner was over Ellen rose from the table and they both stood up—good-breeding is never forgotten even to one's wife.

"My dear Frank, as I am the only lady in the house and am rather fond of the smell of smoke than otherwise, you and Ned are at liberty to enjoy your cigar or cigarette in the drawing-room."

"Thanks, darling, we will join you almost immediately, before in fact you have selected your music," answered Frank, opening the door for her to pass through. When he returned a happy smile was on his face. "Ned," he said—"ah, I told Nell today I should be calling you Ned before the dinner had passed—Ned, let us seal our friendship in a bumper of champagne. I have a splendid bottle here."

"Right willingly, my dear old fellow."

And they did, draining both glasses and bottle.

"Ned, you will stand by me if they attempt the worst—you can guess what—you will be my friend?"

"To the death, to the very end of my fortune. And here's to the noblest and truest man I have met—yourself, and the woman who would sacrifice her life for you."

And the toast was drunk.

They were about to proceed upstairs when Cottell came in with a card.

Frank read the name, and a flush surmounted his forehead.

"Ned, go to Nell. I will join you in an instant. This is one of my father's executors," and directly after Edward Temple left the room his father's executor entered it.

He was an elderly, gentleman with a florid complexion, almost snow-white hair and whiskers, but wearing no moustache. He approached Frank with the air of an old friend, and Frank greeted him very cordially.

"I am so sorry you are an hour behind time," smiled Frank, nodding his head towards the dinner table as an explanation of his sorrow.

"Thanks, but don't trouble, my dear Hopetown. I knew I should be late. I prepared for it. I drove with all haste here on—on, ahem! slightly painful business, at the same time it is imperative that you should know it at once."

"Sit down, sir. What can I offer you—port? I will drink with you."

His guest tasted the wine with the air of a connoisseur, pronounced it excellent, and then gravely proceeded to business.

"My dear sir, firstly I must beg of you to hear me calmly, and not under any circumstances allow what I have to say to disturb your peace of mind, for really"—and here the good old gentleman laughed—"I simply smile at the whole affair and the malice that lies at the bottom of it, and am convinced that such a paltry attempt at robbery can never survive the simplest investigation."

What did all this mean? Frank's heart sank and his face alternately flashed and paled with the varying of his fears. His mind conceived the very worst, because the most dreaded, ill news at first. As the old gentleman went on he thought perhaps some revelation was coming concerning John.

"The fact is, I need scarcely tell you that Mrs. Hopetown and her son have ever envied you the possession of your father's entire property, and now that they know you have been in communication with myself and other executors concerning your coming of age they have trumped up some silly charge, or rather case, and filed a petition praying for the intervention of the Court of Chancery to restrain your father's executors carrying out the instructions in his last will and testament."

"But the plea," asked Frank, white as marble and trembling like a frightened child, "the plea?"

The executor looked at him uneasily, sadly, and hesitated.

"Mr. Forbes, I implore you to keep nothing from me. I can bear it because I anticipate you."

"The plea, then, my dear young sir, is that you are incapable and unfit to have the management of so vast an estate—"

"I know—I know!" cried Frank. "They would dare, even on a sworn affidavit, declare that I am not sane?"

Mr. Forbes took up his wine-glass to drink and sighed deeply. Frank read the confirmation of his doubts in the old gentleman's face.

"But, my dear Hopetown, you really cannot imagine for a moment that we care one iota for that. I merely came to put you on your guard, and to ask and beg that you will be advised by me. Go into society as much as possible, seek friends of your own, be with them. Take no notice of this, write your instructions to me concerning your coming of age, and I think we shall ultimately have the pleasure of leaving our enemies to pay the costs of their folly," and Mr. Forbes smiled confidently.

"I have one friend, he is upstairs now—her brother," said Frank. "I should like him to know something of this. He is a good and staunch friend and a powerful one."

"I am glad. I shall be pleased to see him, and now to go farther into this business. It is reported that you are married. Now, my dear friend, keep nothing from me; I will help you and I will advise you. Remember, I hold that sealed packet your father gave me. It is still sealed, but I have a singular presentiment that the sealed packet would settle any difficulty that may arise. The superscription is curious and suggestive. I have a copy of it here."

Mr. Forbes took from the interior of a handsome morocco-leather pocket-book a slip of paper, on which was written:

"To Ernest Harold Forbes, Esquire, of Longley, Essex, and Mount Street, London, my old and tried friend and counsellor, to whom I, Francois Egbert Hopetown, entrust this sealed packet, containing my last thoughts and wishes should my dear son Francis ever be in trouble. If not, to be kept sealed until after he is married and over age, when I wish contents to be made known."

"You see, therefore, the packet contains some provision in the event of your being in great trouble, and I will, if events grow worse, open it. Therefore, my dear young friend, keep nothing from me that concerns yourself. I can, I think, without breach of trust, interpret your father's intentions concerning the sealed packet in this way—that should you be in any great trouble, even during your minority, I may break the seal. What provision your good father has made in the event of unforeseen emergencies I cannot even conjecture."

"I shall most gladly confide in you, Mr. Forbes, and in fact place myself in your hands. I have long since felt that there has been a conspiracy to weave the meshes of a terrible legal complication around me. But what could I do? You were on the Continent. Then whom had I to go to? The place that should be my home is my enemies' camp."

"That is sadly true," sighed Mr. Forbes, whose honest, genial heart revolted at the flagrant attempt at a cruel and wrongful claim instituted by a stepmother, as in this case.

"You are just in time for tea, Mr. Forbes, pray accompany me to the drawing-room. I should like you to speak to Mr. Temple and hear his opinion upon certain things. It may be better that you should."

Mr. Forbes assented and begged that the horses

in his carriage might be given some refreshment too, as they had come rapidly a very long way.

Frank gave the necessary instructions and then led his guest upstairs.

Mr. Forbes was charmed with Ellen, and seemingly predisposed in Edward's favour. The conversation during tea was of a general kind, in which Mr. Forbes obtained glimpses of Edward's strange career.

When the tea was cleared away the three gentlemen drew apart to the windows, and Ellen, with excellent tact, went to the piano. The grave conversation, the grave faces, the flush of anger in Edward's fiery eyes, and the pallid expression of Frank, did not escape her as she sat there and became at length so oppressed by the uncertain dread, the vague but ominous presentiment that something was wrong, that danger hung over the head of him she loved most dearly, that her hands trembled, she could no longer play upon those ivory keys, and seizing an opportunity most favourable, she glided from the room.

This debate was a long one—long and earnest throughout, while Frank's suffering was visible, but at length Mr. Forbes cheerily ended by saying:

"Well, my young friends, if we three cannot circumvent their palsy and hollow plans, why, we don't deserve the name of Englishmen!"

And then Ellen returned. The spirit-stand, soda, and seltzer were brought in, the gentlemen each took his favourite "settler," and Edward drove away in Mr. Forbes's carriage as if they had been two of the oldest and the best friends ever met with.

Edward had arranged to meet Frank the next day for the purpose of coming inadvertently in contact with John Hopetown. Frank, though evidently worse in health, and suffering from a severe nervous attack, kept his appointment, and drove to his chambers in St. James's. He expected that John Hopetown would call, and as he did, coming alone, knowing that Ruhl, his inseparable companion, and Frank could only meet as enemies. Edward Temple had prearranged that he should be introduced as if they had never met, as he wished to see how far John Hopetown would recognise him without having his memory coached up.

This was a trying moment for Frank for more than one reason. Since the revelations Mr. Forbes had made he could no longer greet his cousin with that genial affection which had so characterized him during their first few meetings.

John Hopetown looked a great, reckless, brilliant fellow, full of animal spirits; his laugh was loud and hearty, and he greeted his cousin almost boisterously.

Edward Temple watched him with a face strangely marked with perplexity and doubt. At first he had started forward, and seemed to check back a cry. The face was what John Hopetown's might have been had care been more merciful to him.

When John Hopetown perceived Temple he became grave in an instant, as it is our wont when unexpectedly ushered into the presence of a stranger. Their eyes met. Frank, looking from one to the other, saw no sign of recognition pass between them.

Was Ned's acquaintance so slight with John Hopetown that the change his acquisition to wealth had made baffled him? Or could it be possible that one—this man who called him cousin, or the man who met Temple in Canada—was an impostor?

"Allow me to introduce my friend Mr. Temple," said Frank, and as his cousin bowed he went through the formalities of an introduction.

They shook hands with that freedom which comes of travel such as Hopetown and Edward Temple had seen. Temple was tempted at first to make some remark that would have revealed he expected to be recognized. Something in John Hopetown's face when he was grave reminded him of his late friend, but when he spoke and smiled the resemblance vanished.

They entered into conversation. Edward wished to draw him out about America and Canada, but John Hopetown avoided the subject, and expressing a gladness to see Frank looking better, and hoping to see him later in the day, he took his leave.

"Well," said Frank, who had been watching this trifling scene with breathless and heart-palpitating interest, "has he forgotten you? or can my cousin be mean enough to wish to forget his friends now that he is reinstated?"

"Neither," said Edward Temple, with compressed lips. "He is not your cousin, Frank, nor is he John Hopetown."

"What?"

"As sure as there is light from the sun that man is an impostor!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness.

Wherein the enemy doth much. *Shakespeare.*

STARTLING events began to take a very rapid course now—strange and undreamt-of events which would have startled the world pretty well had they been made known as they occurred, and that set even

those who had expected such things wondering at the marvellous and inexplicable ways of Providence.

When Edward Temple left Francis Hopetown he returned home with the determination to carry out a deep and dangerous purpose. For Ellen's sake he mentally swore to protect Frank from the shameful conspiracy that was not only endangering his liberty but perhaps his life.

Edward found only his mother and Amy at the dull house at Kennington. Charles Ruhl rarely came home until the small hours in the morning. He let himself in with a latch-key then, and was only seen during breakfast-time.

Mrs. Temple, looking upon him, as she ever had done, as a second son, still looked upon him as one of the family, and permitted him to come and go just as he pleased. He had once suggested leaving the house altogether, but he spoke in such a sadly dejected way that Mrs. Temple's heart yearned towards him, and she declared that she could not bear the idea of parting with him.

So he stayed on, and when Edward came home Mr. Joyce, the quiet elderly lodger, had notice that his rooms would be required for Mr. Temple.

Edward's bedroom adjoined that of Ruhl, a simple circumstance scarcely worthy of note, and yet this was the one which brought about some of the most terrible events in the life of Charles Ruhl.

Mrs. Temple was looking her old self now that her dear son was home again. She had heard so much of Ellen that it did not seem like having lost her now. But she was still inflexibly stern. Edward had told her that she might go and see Ellen. Mrs. Temple shook her head.

"No, Edward," she said, gravely, but without anger, "it is Ellen's place to come to me. Had she taken me into her confidence at first I should have noted differently. I should indeed. If a mother cannot respect and keep a daughter's secrets who can, Edward? Ellen must come to me first. I shall not go to her, unless she is ill or in great trouble."

"Very well, ma. It will be all right soon."

Mrs. Temple hoped so, but did not give way. She possessed much of that simple dignity which sprang from a stern sense of justice and right that made Ellen what she was.

"I hope Amy will take a lesson by her sister's folly."

"Amy is well enough," answered Edward, turning away, "she only wants looking after a little. By the way, where is Amy?"

He ascended the stairs, wondering what the child could be doing. She was very strange of late, he noticed, and changed too. The former old look was deepening, her long, thoughtful moods were more frequent, she kept apart from her mother and brother, seeking solitude in her own room. Even her petulance was gone. She was docile and obedient, traits so unlike her that Mrs. Temple contemplated them with serious alarm.

Her round, plump figure had lost some of its flesh, leaving her more shapely and taller by a perceptible degree. Strangers would have taken her for a girl of seventeen or eighteen at sight, when she conversed she seemed even much older, though only sixteen.

Edward Temple, going softly to her room, found the door a little way open, and through the crack he saw her seated at a table, the diary Charles Ruhl had given her lying open on the desk. She had been making entries, and was now sitting, deep in thought.

Edward hastily entered the room, and placing his hands on her shoulders, playfully, it seemed, but really with the intention of preventing her closing the book, he spoke in his kindly way.

"Come, my little woman, all alone again; this will never do. I shall be off to Canada again if my little companion always greets me in this way."

While he was speaking he managed to read one or two of the entries, and they awakened the strongest feelings of curiosity and doubt.

One ran:

"Thursday—Dear Charles begged me to give him the diamond cross Ellen gave me, because it was Ellen's. He gave me one in return, even larger and handsomer than Ellen's. Poor Charles! How dreadful must be such an ambition as his. Heaven guard him and keep him!"

Another ran:—

"Charles is changed sadly—sadly. Can he see that his future is filled with dark clouds; that the path he is walking is filled with pitfalls and snares? More mystery—more mystery. Oh! if I only knew the truth, that I might watch him; that he might retract; repentance cannot even come too late. Oh! that I could know more!"

Edward did not let his sister see that he had read these passages. She had started at his touch, and turned up a white, terrified face to his when he spoke.

"Amy, come downstairs. I don't like you to stay alone moping in this way."

"I did not know you were in, Ned. I'll come in a moment."

"Put your diary away. Come now, I want you to take a drive with mother. In the evening you shall go somewhere with me."

"To see Ned?"

"Not for a day or two."

"I may go then?"

"Yes; perhaps to stay."

Amy shook her head with a gravity that made Edward Temple regard her with more keen interest.

"I do not want to stay, thank you, Ned. I prefer remaining here with—with you and ma."

"Thank you, miss, for the compliment, but if you stay at home you must be a little more cheerful or I"—here he laughed good-humouredly—"I shall think—and should have thought, only you are so young—that you are in love."

And he laughed again.

Amy's face flushed red and her eyes filled with tears, but she turned away and made no reply.

It was a question of doubt whether she was angry or only the victim of a girlish modesty not at all too prevalent in these days.

Edward moved towards the door, while Amy put the diary away.

"I must get that," he said, mentally. "That child knows something of the mystery that surrounds Ruhl and this new John Hopetown. That diary may be the keystone to—"

"Ned."

"Well, my dear."

"Have you seen Charles?"

"No."

"He stays out very much lately, does he not?"

"Why shouldn't he, little one? He is well off, and may care for a better place than this. What is a home to a man in his struggling days may have a very different aspect when those struggles are over."

"But Charles says he can never be so happy as he has been here."

"And so miserable."

"That was through Ellen."

"My dear Amy, we must not be Ruhl's dictators in things of that kind. I rather think that Ruhl has no one to thank for his unhappiness but himself."

Amy looked up at him astonished—not at the words, but the tone they were spoken in, and there was a deep cloud upon Edward's face too—a deeper shadow than Amy had never seen there before.

A chill of alarm and misgiving crept upon her—why she could not explain.

When Amy and Mrs. Temple had gone out in a hired carriage Edward lit up a big meerschaum pipe and sat down to think. For a long time he remained in moody silence and his thoughts were strange ones.

"Here is a man who suddenly comes into the possession of an unheard-of sum of money and expects more. He is an inseparable friend of John Hopetown of to-day. He is mixed up with the enemies who are trying to rob Frank. Ah! I must see Amy's diary; that child has watched and seen more than any of us would be likely to dream of. Yes, I must see that diary."

He did not quite like to surreptitiously gain possession of Amy's diary, and thereby learn her most secret thoughts, but he instinctively felt that to ask her for it would be useless, and to show that he suspected something was wrong would only cause his young sister pain.

"They have worked in the dark and in secret," he muttered. "I must do the same until I find either that I am mistaken or that there is a mystery or a conspiracy that must be uprooted."

He went to Amy's room. The desk given her by Charles was locked, and on the table. Like most of these fancy things, it is not difficult to find a key to fit the lock.

Edward Temple had one amongst those on the large bunch he carried in his pocket. He turned the lock easily and with some reluctance he took out the diary.

The first entry was a year or so back. But its tone told Edward that this was a keystone to all the rest and touched upon the subject that was strangely interesting to Edward Temple now.

He skimmed over the first few entries which merely spoke of Ruhl's habits, his promises, evenings spent out and other general commonplaces.

Then came one under the heading of June.

"Friday—Charles came home late, almost daylight, and brought a friend, John Hartpool, such a nice gentleman, with his handsome brown beard and large brown eyes. He seemed so sad. He and Charles had tried to save a gentleman from drowning, Brinsley Congreve by name. The poor gentleman was dead when rescued. Mr. Hartpool is going to stay a day or two. Charles is always with him, and holding private conversations. I think there is some mystery."

"Wednesday," another ran, "Charles was carefully concealing some papers and a man's coat and trousers in his yellow trunk. I saw him accidentally."



[A STARTLING RECOGNITION.]

I think they came from the poor dear dead gentleman, for the inquest is over."

"Thursday—I heard Charles and Mr. Hartpool quarrelling. Hartpool would not agree to something Charles proposed. It is secret and mysterious. Heard them up all night; something was said of robbing the dead. I shudder at these things. I wish Mr. Hartpool was gone."

Then at intervals followed several entries all bearing upon what she would consider a mystery.

Edward, perhaps mistrusting his memory, took a careful copy of these entries, dated them and folding the paper put them carefully in his pocket-book.

He had seen many things in this diary that sent the blood rushing into his head and made him dread for Amy's future. One passage will pretty well tell the burden of them all.

"Ellen loves a stranger! Why is it I am glad? I know I am; I feel I am. But they would laugh at me if I dared to let what I feel be seen. Not sixteen yet! They think me only a child, yet I love him. Oh, Charles, Charles! if you only knew—if you only knew how my heart yearns towards you, how every word and every look is treasured up by me, you would never treat me as you would a child. I love him with all my heart and would follow him through the world."

Edward Temple did not make a note of these. His memory was good enough to retain them, and he hoped they would never go beyond the dumb love enclosed in that ormolu-bound desk.

When Amy and her mother came home they found Edward in a strangely thoughtful mood.

He unconsciously regarded Amy with a sad, pitying glance that was full of pathos, had she only have known its meaning.

Edward had conceived a bold notion, which he intended to carry out on the following day, and in the meantime he wrote to Frank. The letter was private even from Ellen.

"Amy," Edward said, quietly, "will you come out with me to-morrow?"

"Oh, yes, Ned! I shall be pleased to."

Edward Temple knew that his little sister was fond of the West End; the brilliant scenes of life and beauty in the Row and through the Mall in the season had a charm for her that was almost an infatuation.

Amy thought her brother a little strange in his sudden whims and fancies. Mrs. Temple thought that he seemed troubled, and she wondered at the cause. She knew that to question him would be useless, for he never said more than he wished others to know, and then he told his thoughts and his troubles without being asked.

He had set himself a stern purpose and knew that its consummation relied upon his own secrecy and promptitude. The extracts from Amy's diary had opened up a new channel of thought, and, without letting her know it, he intended making her the means of assisting him in working out this mystery which she had alluded to so often.

They drove to the park in the afternoon of the following day, left the cab at Hyde Park Corner and sauntered into the Row. There were lovely equestrians, in riding-habits perfect marvels of tailoring skill, elderly gentlemen conspicuous chiefly from their shabbiness and graceful swells who rode more to be looked at than for pleasure.

The footpath contained its usual crowd of fashionable loungers, todies, spongers, and hangers-on. Edward Temple did not pay much attention to these until he had strolled the whole length of the Row watching every gentleman rider that passed, evidently looking for some one he could not find. Then he turned his attention to the loungers who filled the sunlit gravel path.

Amy, pleased with the scene, took unusual notice of nearly every face that passed her. One amongst them, which came upon her very suddenly as it turned from a friend, rivetted her attention—the face of a tall, handsome man, who approached her with a fixed and steady gaze.

"Oh, Edward, look!"

"Well, my dear, what is the matter? Ah, good morning," said Edward, lifting his hat as the stranger passed, still looking intently at Amy.

"Do you know him, Ned?"

"What makes you ask in that tone of surprise? You seem to know him too. Who is it?"

"John Hartpool, or his double."

"What?" exclaimed Edward, and then he checked himself, laughed as though very much amused, and set Amy wondering by this startling piece of information:

"John Hartpool's double? That is John Hopetown."

"The man who lately came home?"

"The same."

"How strange—how very strange! I should like to hear him speak."

"So you shall one of these days."

And then Edward became moody and thoughtful. He seemed tired of the promenade now, but, unwilling to let Amy see it, stayed as it were purely for her sake.

His face had grown hard and stern, his manner absent-minded and abrupt. The change in him was too self-evident for Amy not to see and feel a little affected by it.

"I must see Ellen and Frank," he thought, "and

see them without delay. Amy," he said, aloud, "did Nell see much of John Hartpool?"

"As much as I did. She liked him."

"Tell me all about him."

And as Amy began to rattle on in her impulsive way he judiciously led her from the park.

Edward's mind was terrible disturbed. He saw his sister and Frank involved in the meshes of a gigantic conspiracy, which even mystified him as yet. There was some strange link missing in the chain of difficulties, which must be found and woven together ere an effective blow could be struck. But there was worse to come yet—a trouble he had not suspected.

When, a day or two later, he went down to Sydenham he found Frank ill in bed, prostrated by a low fever brought on by over mental anxiety.

He was of age and found that Mrs. Hopetown, her son and his cousin had prevented him touching his property until he was examined by a jury of lunatic asylum officers and medical men and the application heard before judges at trial bar.

Involved thus in a stupendous lawsuit, harassed and dismayed, his health had given way and he lay up, giving orders to be left entirely alone.

The news of his illness spread. Mrs. Hopetown and her son had called. He would not see his step-mother and Mar was denied admittance. But Mrs. Hopetown came again, determined to see him. Sue came with his late father's physician.

"I will see him," she said, "and dare any one prevent me?"

"It is his wish that you should not," said Dyer, "and mistress will not have his wishes slighted."

Mrs. Hopetown forced her way past Dyer and went to the sick-room, followed by the physician. At the bedroom door she was opposed by Ellen.

"I cannot admit you," she said, with dignity.

"But I refuse to leave," answered Mrs. Hopetown. "Dr. Fisher," she went on, "I wish you to see my stepson. I believe that she hides him thus that his unhappy condition may not be known. I do not accept her authority, for I do not know by what right she dares oppose me."

She had rudely pushed her way into the room, and Ellen turned upon her then.

"By the right, madam, of being mistress of this house. By the stronger and more sacred right of being his wife, and I dare you, madam, to come between me and my husband. I dare you to interfere. My authority is that given by the laws of Church and State. Let me see how far I can go when duty to him demands it."

She rang the bell furiously for Dyer, and at that moment Edward Temple arrived.

(To be continued.)



[THE HUT ON THE BEACH.]

MARLIN MARDUKE.

CHAPTER VII.

In the hall above Elena laid her hand upon the stranger's arm, saying:

"You must hasten to leave the inn, and then the town."

"Oh, that certainly and instantly," replied he, "though I own I am loth to desert the noble youth whom you love."

"Your stay could not save him from harm now," she said, quickly and calmly, though a pang of agony shot through her soul that instant. "But I do not think they will slay him if they can capture him alive. Your attendant is trying to find his way to the stables—though I asked him to pause for a moment—"

"I am here," said Varil, appearing at that moment with a lamp. "The stables are locked. Have you no key?"

"None at hand, sir. It is a standing order here that when an affray begins the stables shall be locked and all admittance prevented until quiet is again restored," replied Elena, as she closed and barred the door at the head of the stairs which they had just ascended. "I sought to inform you of this, but now—"

"I own I was impatient," interrupted Varil, with eagerness. "But without horses we cannot escape from this town which swarms with smugglers and allies of these two rascally Mardukes. And yet we must press on to see that the smack sails immediately for the coast of France with the secret instructions, or James the Second will again be captured."

These words were not addressed to Elena, though she heard them. Yet, totally unfamiliar with the politics of the stormy period, she could understand but very little of their import.

She had heard, however, for the knowledge was universal in the kingdom, that a plot had been formed by the enemies of King James to dethrone him, and to place the crown upon the head of his nephew and son-in-law, William, Prince of Orange, husband of his ambitious daughter Mary; that in the latter part of the previous month William had landed in England; that James had attempted a cowardly flight, and had been captured and carried back to London by a band of desperadoes—indeed she knew that Geoffrey and Herod Marduke were of the party that had arrested the fugitive monarch, the most foolish and pusillanimous of his royal race—for when James became a bigot he became cowardly also. She had heard that his queen, Mary Beatrice, of Modena with the infant prince, had fled to France; that

Prince George of Denmark, with his wife, Princess Anne, another daughter of James, had joined the Dutch invader, and she had heard the report brought by the courier, Fry, that James had again fled.

Elena little knew that it was the earnest desire of William of Orange that his wife's father should escape unmolested from the English kingdom, for as long as James should remain in it there was great reason to dread that the old cavalier loyalty, so faithful to all of the unfortunate race of Stuart, might rally around the royal standard and drive the Dutch invaders into the sea.

What she heard, therefore, was of no interest to her, though she wondered greatly at the change in the manner of the attendant, Varil, who now addressed the stranger, not in the tone of a servant, but with the air of an equal, if not a superior.

But there was no time to ponder upon this newly-discovered mystery, for it was necessary that the strangers should escape from the inn immediately.

"Gentlemen," she said, hastily, "within five minutes this house will be surrounded by enemies to your escape. You must fly at once under my guidance, or you will be captured and perhaps slain. I know nothing of the business that has called you to Anglesey, or I might assist you. Escape from the inn first, and afterward from the town and vicinity—and I warn you that your escape from the inn will be made far more easily if attempted immediately than your escape from the town. Geoffrey Marduke's word is law for miles around—and as you seem to have incurred this deadly enmity your situation is perilous indeed."

Both the stranger and Varil were courageous and experienced men, yet there was something so deep-seated in the tone and air of the handsome speaker, a terror, or rather a horror of the man of whom she spoke, that both felt a strange thrill of fear chill their hearts as they exchanged glances.

Elena continued, eagerly:

"Gentlemen—for I know now that you are both gentlemen, and perhaps noblemen—confide in me, and with the aid of Heaven I think I can lead you at least to temporary safety."

"We will confide in you, fair girl," replied the stranger.

"I have often said," remarked Varil, as his grave and severe face glowed with deep feeling, "that never would I place my life or liberty in the hands of a woman, but I cannot believe that you wish to harm us—"

"To harm you, sir!" cried Elena, in sudden amazement, and turning an indignant look upon the attendant.

He started slightly, and then whispered to the stranger:

"I see the resemblance now—it is remarkable—"

His farther comments were cut short by the roaring and shouting of the mob outside the inn.

"Haste! haste!" cried Elena, anxiously. "It will soon be impossible to escape from the inn, and the friends of Geoffrey Marduke will tear you into pieces. Ah, great Heaven!" she added, in a sudden torrent of emotion, and clasping her hands in an agony of supplication, "guard the life and person of Marlin, dear Marlin!"

Then remembering that it was no time for display of aught except desperate energy of action she snatched the lamp from the hand of Varil, and saying "Follow me!" hurried away to the rear door of the inn, which having opened, she whispered to the stranger:

"Walk straight on until you arrive at the edge of the water. Turn then to the right and walk along the beach until you arrive at a small house, or hut, formed of an old vessel with its keel up. Knock at the door, and if an aged man opens it, say 'We fly from death—713'—he will then be your friend, and in him you must implicitly trust."

"One moment, maiden," said the stranger. "Why would it not be better for us to hurry from the vicinity, and—"

"Are you familiar with the locality?" interrupted Elena, gravely.

"Not at all."

"Then you would most certainly fall into some pit or trap," she said, warningly. "Even by day the paths which a fugitive would be most likely to choose are beset with covered pits, concealed traps, and a hundred of cruel devices used by the smugglers to injure and affright the coastguard and all other enemies. To attempt to cut across the country at night, and being at the same time totally unacquainted with the country, would be nothing less than the wildest folly. Away! I may see you again."

To give emphasis to her words she closed the door, and the two travellers found themselves alone in the rear of the inn and left to their own discretion.

The shouts and yells of the mob of desperadoes in front of the house, the yells and whoops of others in many other quarters of the town, the flaming of torch-lights here and there, warned the strangers that they had no time to lose.

"Come," said Varil, "we must obey the maiden."

"Hark!" whispered the other, as a sudden stillness fell upon the night air. "Some one is asking and obtaining silence. Hark!"

They were not far from the inn, and they heard plainly the words which were called out from the front of the house, and recognized the harsh, trumpet-like voice of Geoffrey Marduke saying to the listening multitude:

"Two Jacobite spies have hidden in the upper story of the 'Stuart Arms.' Surround the house! guard the town! cut off retreat into the country! watch the bay! arrest every stranger, gentle or simple! A hundred golden crowns to him who captures, dead or alive, these two Jacobites!"

A great roar of applause arose from the mob, into whose presence we will usher the reader presently, and the two strangers hurried straight on until the sea arrested their progress.

"Turn to the right, she said," whispered Varil. "Fortunately the night had set in dark and suddenly."

CHAPTER VIII.

VARIL and his master, as for the present we will continue to call the strangers, apprehensive of immediate pursuit as soon as it should become suspected that they had left the inn, had rapidly quickened their pace into a sharp run by the time that they reached the beach, which was scarcely half a mile distant from the "Stuart Arms."

The sun had not been long down, but as it went down the late cloudless sky had grown suddenly dark; dense masses, black and threatening, had arisen as if by magic from the bosom of the sea. The darkness of night had come down quickly, with a low, sobbing sweep, and with all the sullen surges as they swept heavily and increasingly upon the rocky beach.

The strangers paused and gazed for an instant out towards the sea and over the bay. It had already become too dark, however, for even outlines to be distinguishable, though lights could be seen glimmering here and there, on board of anchored craft.

"I would it had been appointed that we should meet him whom we desire to see here, rather than at Collum's Cliff," remarked the stranger as he and Varil turned to the right as directed by Elena, and walking on very rapidly. "How said the maiden?"

"That we should follow the beach closely," replied Varil. "Though if the darkness becomes much deeper we shall not be able to see the hovel of which she spoke, and may pass it ignorantly."

"We shall have light enough, and perhaps too much," said the other, as a red glare began to light up the sky on their right. "No doubt the mob has fired the house of some bitter Jacobite. It is a pity, Varil, that thrones can never have a change of occupants without fire and sword as accompaniments."

His companion made no reply, but seemed plunged in absorbing thought, and could his grave face have been seen, it would have been remarked that its expression was painfully sad and melancholy. His mind was far from being upon political matters. He was thinking, even amid the peril around him, of happiness sought, happiness gained, and happiness lost—and as he, whom we have thus far styled Hubert Varil, departingly believed, happiness lost for ever.

Lost, indeed, to him had all happiness been for many a long and cheerless year.

And though grief had not blanched to snowy whiteness his hair and beard, as it had those of his companion, it had hardened his brow and made severely ironical his smile and tone, for, unlike his companion, Hubert Varil had lost two of man's most potent talismans—faith in woman's love and hope of earthly happiness.

Dreams of ambition, fantasies of love, delirium of avarice Hubert Varil had none. The world, its life, its schemes, its very cause, had become bleak and barren wastes to him while yet in the very golden prime of vigorous manhood, for he had not numbered fifty years, and his tall and athletic form was as full of strength and activity and grace as that of a young man of twenty-five.

These two had drunk deeply of life's miseries, and drank deeply thus at the very beginning of young manhood. Both had literally grown gray in grief years before that age when the hair of men begins to be silvered here and there by the frosts of hard-gallop time.

The features of Hubert Varil, though still regular and handsome, were somewhat furrowed and wrinkled, and the lines upon his high, broad forehead were deeply cut and not few. Hair and beard, that had been nut-brown in his youth, was now thickly grizzled and mottled with gray.

He had lost faith and hope in man, in woman and in Heaven. Life to him was a sorry task, an ordeal through which he must struggle, to die at last, as all that is mortal must die, and after that there was to be rest—or nothing.

In his heart there lingered faith and confidence in but one mortal, and that was faith and confidence in his companion's friendship for him.

But this companion had not, like Hubert Varil, lost faith in man, nor in woman, nor lost hope of earthly happiness.

His hair and beard, as soft and silken as floss, were as white as the driven snow, and yet in his youth they had been as jet-black as the ebon purple of the raven's wing.

"You now are thinking of the buried past," he said, as Varil made no reply to several of his remarks. "Think of the present, for the glare of that blazing house begins so cast too broad a light upon this open beach for our concealment."

"Your past, Richard, may well be called buried," replied Varil, in a sarcastic, gloomy tone. "She whom you loved is indeed buried, and in the certainty of that belief you can speak of the buried past. But she whom I loved may still be living and mocking the heart she betrayed. There is a vast difference, Richard, between our griefs, though we have both grown gray in grief. The wife you loved died and was buried. The wife I loved betrayed and disgraced my name. Ah, me!" he added, as a deep-drawn sigh, almost a groan of heart anguish, rose like a bitter sob to his lips, "I hope she has been dead for many a year."

"So vindictive a wish is wholly unworthy of the man whom I delight to call my friend and kinsman," said the stranger, as he took the arm of his companion.

"There is no vindictiveness in my wish, Richard. I hated her very name and memory once, as you well know. But that is all of the forgotten past now. Could man desire a worse fate for a treacherous eloped wife than that she should live to grow gray in the inevitable consequences of her sin—to live sinning, despised by him for whom she forsakes a trusting husband, cast off to sin again and again; to sink deeper and deeper in the mire of vice and disgrace she has chosen; to grow into a shrivelled or a bloated heap of iniquity, a foul human beast of prey, despised, detested, scorned by beings as vile as herself; and then to die—Heaven only knows how such lost ones die? Wish I her not well then when I say would she were of the dust and buried a score and more of years?"

Hubert Varil uttered these bitter words with profound earnestness, far different from the quiet sarcasm of his customary tone, his voice becoming deep and hollow as he concluded.

His companion made no reply, and Varil exclaimed: "If ever I do forget my manhood and my honour—and to forget one I must forget both—may Heaven take mercy upon me, and that same instant in which I brand my name, slay me. I beg this as boon from Heaven; and would it not have been a boon for her—my treacherous wife—had a lightning-bolt smitten her dead when first her soul conceived the thought of shame?"

"Let us talk of other affairs," remarked the other, somewhat bluffly.

"Ah, it is easy to say that, Richard Englemort—"

"Take care!" interrupted the other, as Varil pronounced this name. "You, ever so prudent and I, ever so rash, must have exchanged natures."

"It is because I have violated my oath."

"What oath?"

"My oath that, so help me Heaven, never would I again place faith in woman!" replied Varil, with his usual quiet sarcasm. "And here am I trusting my life to the sincerity of—what shall I call her?"

"If you mean the maiden of the Inn we have just quitted," observed Richard Englemort, "you will not overshoot the mark by calling her perfection."

Varil laughed a light, sarcastic laugh and said:

"So you have ever thought of all handsome women, Richard."

"You wrong me in that, Hubert," replied the other, quickly. "Not of all handsome women."

"Well, of all handsome women whom all reminded you of Lady Ida—why she hath been dead these twenty years—"

"And had she been dead a thousand years, Hubert, and I so long alive, by my hopes of Heaven her memory would be as dear to me. Do you know, Hubert, that I have had a dream of late?"

"Waking dreams no doubt you have had a thousand, Richard," replied Varil, in his quiet and easy tone of irony, although they were walking rapidly. "You are ever building huge, rainbow-lined castles in the air—"

"And is not such airy masonry preferable to your habit of digging imaginary pits, graves, catacombs, sepulchres, in which your own brooding and despondent mind is sole tenant in fact, and imaginary fiends its companions?" retorted Richard Englemort. "But it is not of a dream I dreamt in my sleep, Hubert, of which I speak."

"All dreams are founded upon our waking thoughts, and therefore it is mere childishness to place a single serious thought upon them."

"Very true, yet sleep has often made a clue to a waking mystery."

"Well, the dream."

"This is no time to relate it in full, Hubert. Its conclusion was that my wife was not drowned, nor yours false."

"And you are troubled by that absurd dream, Richard?"

"I am troubled by that dream which you are pleased to call absurd," replied Englemort, sturdily.

"He has certainly not taken any wine since noon," thought Varil, as he pondered over the words and tone of his companion, "and therefore he is not what I have never heard of Richard Englemort—drunk. Yet his words would suit better the lips of a wine-blinded fellow than the tongue of a calm and sober gentleman. He has never for an instant wandered in his mind, and we were boys together, nor has he of late received any shock that might shake his brain from its proud and stately poise—yet his words are those of a lunatic. His wife alive, and my wife not treacherous to me! Heard ever man such folly?"

He said aloud, after a moment's pause:

"Your last castle in the air is your greatest, Richard. It is very plain that your skill as air-castle architect increases as you grow older. But when had you this dream? If your brain was tickled with it last night it is very strange that you have said nothing of it to me to-night. My faith! Richard, you should have lightened our dreary ride towards this vile town to-day by relating in full this wonderful dream of sheer impossibilities."

"I did not dream it last night, Hubert."

"Certainly not before."

"No, never before."

"This is a riddle to me, Richard. You said it was a waking dream—"

"It cannot be called such by me."

"Then it was simply an imagination—a nothing of the kind."

"Listen, Varil. You will not scoff, for you are a gentleman and I am your dear friend. But you will not believe as I do, for you are a sceptic," said Englemort, gravely. "It was in the midst of the confusion that swept around us in that room which we have just left, and immediately after the maiden had warned us of the design against our lives, that this dream or vision came upon me. I seemed to grasp, or rather to be grasped by, a profound conviction of two distinct things. One was that my wife was not lost at sea, and the other was that your wife was not untrue to you. Was not this remarkable?"

Hubert Varil made no reply to his companion's question. He merely shrugged his shoulders, a gesture the other could not perceive in the darkness, and thought thus:

"It is strange how the wishes even of the most sensible men will sometimes distort their reason. Now, that Englemort should conceive some absurd fancy concerning the wife whom he loved so fondly is not strange, for in truth the resemblance of that maiden, Elena Rheinhard, to the dead Lady Ida is truly amazing; but why he should have also conceived so much as a thought of my wife at the same time is beyond my reasoning."

Further reflection upon the mystery was stopped by the sudden appearance, as they turned a short bend in the beach, of the hovel described by Elena.

The glare of the reddened sky shed a weird-like light for miles along the beach, and thus the hut was quite visible.

At first glance it seemed simply the hull of a small vessel cast ashore by some exceedingly violent storm, and far beyond the usual high-tide mark, but as our two travellers drew near to it, they saw that it was surrounded by a strong, tall fence, made of stout staves driven deep into the sand, while a low, fierce growl warned them that its occupant was not unguarded.

"I cannot say that I like the appearance of this place of refuge, if such it is to be to us," remarked Varil, as he and his companion halted a few paces from the fence. "Once in, and surrounded, we would be like two crabs in a net."

The growl of the dog within the fence was now raised to a furious baying, and then a deep and powerful voice was heard, saying:

"Down, Hector, down!"

The clamour of the animal at once ceased, and the voice continued, in a careless, easy tone:

"Who comes?"

"Friends," replied Englemort, who wished to see the face of the speaker before he made use of the passwords told him by Elena. "We are friends."

"We? I see that there are two of you," replied the voice within the fence. "No doubt you are friends to each other. Pass on, for there is a ring in your tone and accent that speaks of courts and cities. Such as you need nothing here. Pass on."

"At least," said Varil, in a grave, polite tone,

which sounded musically clear in the deep stillness of the night, "let us see your face, my friend, that we may deliver our message."

His words were followed by a sharp exclamation of surprise on the part of the occupant of the hut, who immediately thereafter replied, in an agitated voice:

"Your name, sir! I cannot show to you my face with out I first know who you are."

"Come," said Englemort, with that haughty tone of reprimand which had caused Marlin Marduke to detect that he was a person of rank in the disguise of a merchant, "we are not thieves nor smugglers, or, perhaps, you might show your face to us. We have a message of import."

The hermit of the beach, as the occupant of the hut was called along the shore and in Anglessey, seemed to hesitate for a moment, then opened his gate boldly and stepped into view.

There was sufficient light reflected from the reddened sky to reveal to the travellers that a man of bowed and bent frame, with a long white beard, and white hair falling far down upon his shoulders, stood before them.

With the extreme of caution so common and necessary in that disturbed era, and especially in the circumstances surrounding himself and his companion, Englemort drew very near to the hermit and said, guardedly:

"We fly from death—712."

"Enter," replied the hermit, instantly, and extending his long arm towards his gate.

They obeyed, and he followed them, carefully fastening his gate as he did so.

A few rapid paces carried the party to the hut, where its owner opened a door, saying:

"Step in boldly that I may close the door."

The interior of the hut was in total darkness until its owner produced a light by means of a flint and steel, and then the travellers saw that they stood within an apartment that had been fashioned with no little care and skill.

There were small windows here and there, made by cutting through the thick oaken planks of the ship, but Varil remarked that none of these apertures were sufficiently large to admit the passage of a man's body; and also that heavy curtain and stout inner shelter belonged to each.

The apartment was irregular in shape, being twice as long as it was wide, and three of the walls following the shape of the ship's hull and stern.

"Be seated and welcome," said the hermit, as he placed his lamp upon a table and waved his hand towards the travellers. "Those who come with the world of Elena the Nameless upon their lips are ever welcome to all that I can give."

"Elena the Nameless!" echoed Englemort, in surprise. "Is she not called Elena Rheinhand?"

"Not by me, sir," replied the hermit. "Not a drop of the hyena-blood of that unpunished ruffian flows in her veins. Let her be called Elena the Nameless until Heaven sees fit to restore to her her right name."

With these words the hermit, who seemed to tremble as with a palsy, after a keen and even anxious gaze upon the handsome and benevolent face of Richard Englemort, turned his eyes for the first time upon the grave and noble features of Hubert Varil.

He gazed but an instant, uttered a cry of pain and sank down helplessly.

(To be continued.)

AN EXTRAORDINARY STRIKE.—On the evening of Friday, the 25th Sept., when the hour of ten arrived, the citizens of Moffat were astonished and amused to hear their ancient clock strike no less than fifty-two, an exertion which naturally rendered it dumb for the next three days. This unusual incident has induced a local rhymist to perpetrate the following lines:—

"The bell strikes one, we take no note of time."
So runs the poet's very solemn rhyme;
But what grave thoughts should rise to mental view.

When Moffat's clock strikes wildly fifty-two?

ACCORDING to the letter of the law, there ought to be no marrying or giving in marriage for the next fortnight in all Prussia. This state of things is a strict consequence of the first introduction of the civil marriage law, which has just come into force, and which prescribes that all intended unions must be notified two weeks before the ceremony can take place. This fact, when thoroughly understood, caused a general feeling of dismay, and it was soon found that something must be done to smoothen the first application of the law. The civil magistrates, therefore, are empowered, upon demand, to dispense with the formality of notification, and the Evangelical Church, seconding the intentions of the Government, has consented to abridge her own formalities

during the period stated. To avoid all mistakes, however, thousands of couples have solved the difficulty by plunging their necks into the matrimonial noose a fortnight in advance. During the last few days especially all the Berlin churches have been crowded and the streets encumbered with strings of carriages freighted with wedding parties.

CAST ON THE WORLD.

CHAPTER XX.

"WHERE will you be left, miss?" asked the good-humoured driver, thrusting his head in at the window of the coach, in one corner of which Mildred sat, closely veiled, and shrinking as far as possible from observation.

"At the Royal Hotel," she answered, and the driver returned:

"Oh, yes, Royal Hotel. I have another passenger who stops there. Here he comes," and he held open the door for a remarkably fine-looking man, who, taking the seat opposite Mildred, drew out a book, in which for a time he seemed wholly absorbed, never looking up except once indeed when a fat old woman entered and sat down beside him, saying, as she sank puffing among the cushions, that "she shouldn't pester him long—she was only going a mile or so to visit her daughter-in-law who had twins."

Involuntarily Mildred glanced at the gentleman, who, showing a very handsome set of teeth, again resumed his book, while she scanned his features curiously—they seemed to her so familiar, so like something she had seen before.

"Who is he?" she kept repeating to herself, and she was about concluding that she must have seen him before, when the stage stopped again before a low-roofed building, and the fat old lady alighted, thanking the gentleman for holding her parcel, which all the way had been her special care.

Again the handsome teeth were visible, while the stranger hoped she would find the twins in a prosperous condition. On the green in front of the house a little child was waiting to welcome grandma; and Mildred, who was fond of children, threw back her thick brown veil to look at it; nor did she drop it again, for the road now wound through a mountainous district, and in her delight at the picturesque scenery which met her view at every turn she forgot that she was not alone, and when at last they reached the summit of a long, steep hill, she involuntarily exclaimed:

"Isn't it grand?"

"You are not accustomed to mountainous views, perhaps," said the stranger, and then for the first time Mildred became conscious that a pair of soft, dark eyes were bent upon her with a searching, burning gaze, from which she intuitively shrank.

Ever since her veil had been removed that same look had been fixed upon her, and to himself the stranger more than once had said, "If it were possible; but no, it cannot be." And yet those eyes, how they carried him back to the long ago; and that nut-brown hair, parted so smoothly from off the polished brow. Could there be two individuals so much alike, and yet nothing to each other?

Some such idea passed through his mind as he sat watching her beautiful face, and determined at last to question her, he addressed her as we have seen.

"Yes, I am accustomed to mountain scenery," she replied, "though not so grand as this."

"Were you born among such?" was the next question put to her, and the answer waited for, oh! so eagerly.

For an instant Mildred hesitated, while the hot blood stained her face and neck, and then she replied:

"I was born in London," while over the fine features of the gentleman opposite there fell a shade of disappointment.

Mildred had interested him strangely; and with a restless desire to know more of her history, he continued:

"Pardon me, miss; but you so strongly resemble a friend I have lost that I would like to know your name?"

Again Mildred hesitated, while the name of Wilton trembled on her lips, but reflecting that she had no longer a right to it, she answered:

"My name, sir, is Miss Hawley."

Something in her manner led the stranger to think she did not care to be questioned farther, and bowing slightly, he resumed his book.

Still his mind was constantly dwelling upon the young girl, who met his curious glance so often that she began to feel uneasy, and was glad when they stopped at last before the door of the Royal Hotel. The stranger helped her out, holding her dimpled hand in his for a moment, and looking down again into the dark bright eyes, as if he fain would read there that what he had so long believed was false.

He knew that he annoyed her, but he could not help it.

Every movement which she made mystified him more and more, and he looked after her until she disappeared through the hall and was admitted to the chamber of her friend and former teacher.

Unfortunately Mrs. Miller was ill, but she welcomed Mildred kindly as Miss Hawley, and talked freely with her of the discovery that had been made.

"You will feel better after a time," she said, as she saw how fast Mildred's tears came at the mention of Lawrence Thornton. "Your secret is safe with myself and my husband, and no one else knows that you ever had claim to another name than Hawley. I am sorry that I am ill just at this time, but I shall be well in a few days, I hope. Meanwhile you must amuse yourself any way you choose. I have given orders for you to have the large front chamber looking out upon the village. The room adjoining is occupied by a gentleman who came here yesterday morning, intending to stop for a few days. He is very agreeable, they say, and quite a favourite with the house."

Mildred thought of her companion in the stage, and was about to ask his name, when a servant appeared, offering to show her to her room. It was one of those warm, languid days in early June, and Mildred soon began to feel the effects of her recent excitement and wearisome ride in the racking headache which came on so fast as to prevent her going down to dinner, and at last confined her to the bed, where she lay the entire afternoon, falling away at last into a deep, quiet sleep, from which about sunset she awoke greatly refreshed and almost entirely free from pain.

Observing that her door was open, she was wondering who had been there, when her ear caught the sound as of some child breathing heavily, and turning in the direction from whence it came, she saw a most beautiful little girl, apparently four or five years old, perched upon a chair near the window, her soft auburn curls falling over her forehead, and her face very red with the emotions she made to unclasp Mildred's reticule, which she had found upon the table.

Once as a carriage rolled down the street she raised her eyes, and to Mildred it seemed as if she were looking once more upon the face which had so often met her view when she brushed her hair before the cracked glass hanging on the rude walls of the gable roof.

"Is it my other me?" she thought, passing her hand before her eyes to clear away the mist, if mist there was. "Isn't it I as I used to be?"

Just then the snapping apart of the steel clasp, and the child's satisfied exclamation of "There, I did do it," convinced her that 'twas not herself as she used to be, but a veritable mass of flesh and blood, embodied in as sweet a face and perfect a form as she ever looked upon.

"I will speak to her," Mildred thought, and in, voluntarily from her lips the word "Sister" came, causing the child to start suddenly and drop the reticule, with which she knew she had been meddling.

Shaking back her sunny curls, which now lay in ringlets about her forehead, and flashing upon Mildred a pair of eyes much, very much like her own, she said:

"How you did frighten me! Are you waked up?"

"Come here, won't you?" said Mildred, holding out her hand; and, won by the pleasant voice, the little girl went to her, and, winding her chubby arms around her neck, said:

"Are you 'most well?"

Mildred answered by kissing her velvety cheek and hugging her closer to her bosom, while over her there swept a most delicious feeling, as if the beautiful creature, nestling so lovingly to her side, were very near to her.

"Where do you live?" she asked; and the child replied:

"Oh, in the ship, and in the railroad, and every-thing."

"But where's your mother?" continued Mildred, and over the little girl's face there flitted a shadow, as she replied:

"Ma's in Heaven, and pa's downstairs smoking a cigar. Hety's sometimes."

"Have you any sisters?" was the next interrogatory; and the answer was:

"I've got one in Heaven, and a brother, too—so pa says."

"Will you tell me what you name is?"

"Edith Wilton. What is yours?" and Edith looked inquiringly at Mildred, who started suddenly, repeating:

"Edith Wilton! Edith Wilton! and did your father come in the stage this morning?"

"Yes," returned the child.

Mildred clasped her hands to her head, which seemed almost bursting with the conviction which the name of Edith Wilton had forced upon her.

She knew now where she had seen a face like that of her stage companion. She had seen it in the pleasant drawing-room at Beechwood, and the eyes which had so puzzled her that morning had many and many a time looked down upon her from the portrait of Richard Wilton.

"Tis he, 'tis he," she whispered. "But why is he here instead of going to his father?"

Then, as she remembered having heard how Richard Wilton had cared for her, shielding her from his father's wrath, and how once she had dared to hope that she might be his child, she buried her face in the pillow and wept aloud, for the world seemed so dark—so dreary.

"What you ty for?" asked little Edith. "What is your name?" she said again, as, mounting the bed, she prepared to display her treasures.

"Milly Hawley," and Mildred's voice trembled so that the child easily mistook the word for Minnie.

"Minnie," she repeated. "That's pretty. I love you, Minnie Hawley," and putting up her waxen hand, she brushed the tears from Mildred's eyes, asking again why she cried.

At first Mildred thought to correct her with regard to her name. Then, thinking it was just as well to be Minnie as anything else, she let it pass, for, without any tangible reason save that it was a sudden fancy, she had determined that if the handsome stranger were Richard Wilton, he should not know from her that she was the foundling left at his father's door.

She had always shrunk from hearing the subject discussed, and it seemed more distasteful to her now than ever, so on the whole she was glad Edith had misunderstood her, for Milly might have led to some inquiries on the part of Richard, if it were he, inasmuch as his mother and sister had borne that rather unusual name; so, instead of replying directly to the child, she said: "Let us go over by the window where the cool breezes come in," and gathering up her playthings, Edith went with her to the sofa, and climbing into her lap, asked, "Where's your ma, Minnie?"

"She's dead," was the reply.

"And is your pa dead too?"

Edith could answer this a voice from the hall called out:

"Edith! Edith! where are you?"

"Here, pa, here with Minnie. Come and see her," and bounding across the floor, the active child seized her father's hand and pulled him into Mildred's room. "Excuse me, Miss Hawley," he said. "Edith is very sociable, and I am afraid you find her troublesome."

"Not in the least. I am fond of children," returned Mildred, taking the little girl again upon her lap, while Mr. Wilton sat down by the other window.

He was a very handsome man, and at first appearance seemed to be scarcely thirty. A closer observation, however, showed that he was several years older, for his rich brown hair was slightly tinged with gray, and there were the marks of time or sorrow about his eyes and forehead. In manner he was uncommonly prepossessing, and a few minutes sufficed to put Mildred entirely at her ease with one who had evidently been accustomed to the society of high-bred, cultivated people.

During this conversation the gentleman incidentally mentioned that his father was living at Beechwood.

"What for you jump?" asked Edith, as Mildred started involuntarily when her suspicions were thus confirmed.

Mr. Wilton's eyes seemed to ask the same question, and bowing her face over the curly head of the child, so as to conceal her tears, Mildred answered: "I have been to Beechwood several times, and know an old gentleman whose son went away many years ago, and has never been heard of since."

"What makes you ty?" persisted Edith, who felt the drops upon her hair.

"I was thinking," returned Mildred, "how glad that old man will be if your father is the son he has so long considered dead."

Mr. Wilton had risen and was gazing fixedly at her. "Miss Hawley," he said, when she had finished speaking, "who are you?—that is, who are your parents, and why have you been in Beechwood?"

Mildred knew that her resemblance to his sister puzzled him just as it did every one, and for a moment she was tempted to tell him everything; then, thinking he would learn it fast enough when he went to Beechwood, she replied:

"My mother was Helen Thornton and my father, her music teacher, Charles Hawley, who died soon after I was born."

Mr. Wilton seemed disappointed, but replied:

"Helen Thornton your mother? I remember her well, and her marriage with Mr. Hawley. You do

not resemble her one-half so much as you do my sister Mildred, for I am that old man's son. I am Richard Wilton."

"Every one who ever saw your sister speaks of the resemblance," returned Mildred. "Indeed, my old nurse says my mother was very anxious that I should look like her, and even used to pray that I might. This may, perhaps, account for it."

"It may—it may," Richard answered abstractedly pacing up and down the room.

Then suddenly turning to Mildred, he asked:

"When were you in Beechwood, and how is my father now? Does he look very old?"

Mildred did not tell him when she was in Beechwood, but merely replied that "his father was well, and that for a man nearly sixty-five he was looking remarkably young."

"Old Mrs. Thompson lives still at the gable-roof with her club-footed grandson, Oliver Hawkins, whose mother was probably living when you went away."

Spite of her resolution Mildred hoped he would ask for the baby next; but he did not. He merely walked faster and faster across the floor, while she sighed mentally:

"He has forgotten me, and I will not thrust myself upon his remembrance."

At last the rapid walking ceased, and coming up before her, Mr. Wilton said:

"It seems strange to you, no doubt, that I have purposely absented myself from home so long, and in looking back upon the past it seems strange to me. I was very unhappy when I went away, and at the last I quarrelled with my father, who bade me never come into his presence again. If you know him at all you know he has a fiery temper. To a certain extent I inherit the same, and with my passions roused I said it would be many years ere he saw my face again. Still, I should have returned had not circumstances occurred which rendered it unnecessary. I wrote to my father twice, but he never answered me, and I said, 'I will write no more.'"

"For three years I remained in New Zealand, and then found my way to India, where, in the excitement of amassing wealth, I gradually ceased to care for anything concerning home."

"At last I made the acquaintance of a fair young English girl, and making her my wife returned with her to England, where, little more than a year since, she died, leaving me nothing to love but Edith. Then my thoughts turned homeward, for I promised Lucy, when dying, that I would seek a reconciliation with my father."

"So I came first here, for this wild, out-of-the-way place is connected with some of the sweetest and saddest memories of my life. In a few days, however, I go to Beechwood, but I shall not apprise my father of my return, for I wish to test the instinct of the parental heart and see if he will know me."

"I have told you so much, Miss Hawley, because I know you must think strangely of my long absence, and then there is something about my long prompts me to wish for your good opinion. I might tell you much more of my life—tell you of an error committed in boyhood, as it were, and in manhood bitterly regretted—not the deed itself, but the concealment of it; but the subject would not interest you."

Mildred could not help fancying that the subject would interest her, but she did not say so, and as Mr. Wilton just then observed that Edith had fallen asleep in her arms, he ceased speaking and hastened to relieve her. The movement awakened Edith, who insisted upon sleeping with Minnie, as she called her.

"Yes, let her stay with me," said Mildred; "she is such an affectionate little thing that she seems almost as near to me as a sister."

"You are enough alike to be sisters. Did you know that?" Mr. Wilton asked, and Mildred blushed painfully as she met the admiring gaze fixed upon her so intently.

He was thinking what a beautiful picture they made—the rose just bursting into perfect loveliness, and the bud so like the rose that they might both have come from the same parent stem.

"Yes, Edith has your eyes," he continued, "your mouth and your expression, but otherwise she is like her mother."

He bent down to kiss the child, who again had fallen away to sleep, and as he did so he could scarce forbear touching his lips to the beautiful face so near to his own.

Had Mildred been a little younger he would undoubtedly have done so, for he was an enthusiastic admirer of girlish beauty, but as it was he merely bade her good night and left the room.

The next morning Mildred was roused by a pair of the softest, fattest, chubby hands patting her round cheeks, and opening her eyes she saw Edith sitting up in bed, her auburn curls falling from beneath her cap and herself playful as a kitten. Oh,

how near and dear she seemed to Mildred, who hugged her to her bosom, calling her "little sister," and wishing in her heart that somewhere in the world she had a sister as gentle and pretty as sweet Edith Wilton.

(To be continued.)

EXPECTATIONS.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SIR MARK TREBASIL entered the morning-room of Blair Abbey with a slow and stately tread, and Mrs. Malverne, beaming a welcome, arose to receive him. She had not seen him in five years, not since her wilful marriage, and her first thought was that he had changed almost beyond recognition. Her second thought was that he was without exception the grandest-looking gentleman she had ever beheld. His fair face had grown grave, stern and haughty, but it was noble and very handsome; his blue eyes were keen; his tall, distinguished figure had a kingly bearing.

Helena Malverne's heart thrilled under his gaze. To win for her husband a man like this, of magnificent presence, great wealth, and high social position, seemed to her from that moment the great and crowning glory of life.

She held out her hand, smiling warmly, and exclaiming:

"I am glad to see you again, Sir Mark. Let me also bid you welcome home to England."

The baronet pressed her hand and released it, returning her greeting with pleasant courtesy, bowed to Vernon, and took possession of a seat quite near to that of the scheming widow.

"Shall I send a message to Miss Stair?" inquired Mrs. Malverne. "You would like, of course, to see the present lady of the abbey, would you not, Sir Mark?"

She regarded him sharply, but his face was impassive as he answered, quietly:

"I sent up my card to Miss Stair when I entered."

What changes a few years have wrought! When I quitted England Madame Falconer lived here alone in solitary state, in a sort of gloomy grandeur. But all that is changed now, and he glanced about the beautiful apartment, with its abundant light, its mellow warmth, its fresh flowers breathing fragrance, its look of supreme comfort united to luxury. "Madame Falconer is dead, and another reigns in her stead."

"Yes," said Mrs. Malverne, bitterly. "I did a bad thing for myself, Sir Mark, when I married against Madame Falconer's will. How could I dream that she would be so vindictive? I had had my own way all my life. She had never crossed my wishes in anything. I supposed that as soon as she knew that I was actually married she would submit to what was irretrievable, and restore me to her favour. I was never more mistaken in my life. Not even the remembrance of my grandmother, who had been her nearest and dearest friend, could induce her to forgive me. My infatuation for my husband was short-lived. I don't think I should ever have married him if Madame Falconer had not forbidden me to accept his attentions. As it was, I heartily repented my folly before I had been married a month. We could do nothing in England, and my husband procured an appointment as attaché to the Chinese embassy, upon a small salary, and we went out to China. Our life there was one full of annoyances and discomforts. I was outdressed by nearly every English lady resident, I lived meagrely, and, worse than all, my husband became more than ever dissolute and profligate. Madame Falconer took no notice of my pleading letters and so I dragged on an uncomfortable existence until my husband died. Then I came home."

"And found Madame Falconer forgiving, I trust?"

"Nothing of the kind. I threw myself at her feet and implored her pardon and protection," said Mrs. Malverne, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, "but she repulsed me. For my grandmother's sake she gave me a shelter here, nothing more. She had found a new favourite in my absence, a young girl, her distant relative and god-daughter. This young girl, Miss Stair, she made her sole heiress. She did not leave me one penny."

At this point Vernon arose and strolled into the conservatory, wandering up and down the fragrant aisles, his hearing sharpened to the conversation in the morning-room even while he seemed absorbed in the flowers.

"I never knew that Miss Stair was a relative of Madame Falconer," said Sir Mark Trebasil. "And so Miss Stair is sole mistress of Blair Abbey?"

"Yes, and I am here on toleration. Miss Stair allows me an income of a hundred pounds a year, and gives me a home; but what are a hundred pounds a year to one who was once prospective heiress of twenty thousand?"

The baronet was silent for a moment, glancing towards the conservatory in which Vernon lurked, and then he said:

"You are aware, of course, that I received your letter of months since, Mrs. Malverne. It followed me about from place to place. I received it only recently, and hurried back to England with all expedition."

The widow looked up, half-pleased, half-uneasy, and stole a glance into an opposite mirror. Her full, fair, sensuous face was at its best, a pink tint upon the cheeks, the heavy white lids half-hiding the pale eyes, the full figure clothed in one of her new French robes, which sparkled with jet. She had laid aside her widow's cap, and her light, hay-coloured hair was arranged in finger-puffs above her forehead.

The bloom of youth had departed long ago; the pink tinting on her cheeks was due to art, the languishing look in her eyes was the result of applications of belladonna, and half the hair upon her head was a recent purchase, but the effect of the whole was certainly charmingly natural, and well calculated to delude an unsuspecting individual of the opposite sex. She put on a coquettish smile and a look of intense interest.

"There were statements in that letter which require explanation," continued Sir Mark. "You will excuse me, I hope, for broaching the subject so promptly and so abruptly, but I am impatient, and we have an excellent opportunity for private conversation."

"Upon what point do you desire enlightenment?" inquired Mrs. Malverne, in a dulcet voice. "I spoke of myself, my bereavement—"

"It is of Miss Stair I wish to speak," interrupted the baronet, as she hesitated. "And here I find it necessary to say—what I had hoped to keep to myself—that I was formerly acquainted with Miss Stair. I became acquainted with her some time since, when she lived in the Tyrol, under the guardianship of her stepmother."

"And was she as fickle then as now?" asked Mrs. Malverne, with apparent innocence. "Was she unable to choose between her lovers? You must have known her in the days when Adrian Rossiter was dearest to her?"

"Yes," said Sir Mark, hoarsely, "that was when I knew her. She loved him then. She—she told me so!"

"Poor Adrian's star seems to have set and Vernon's star is now in the ascendant," said Mrs. Malverne.

"Yes, I know. She loves Vernon. She is my authority for the statement," said the baronet, his face growing graver and sterner and his voice sinking to a lower pitch. "A woman may be fickle and not be utterly unworthy. She may be so unfortunately constituted that she soon tires of a lover. I could swear that she loved Rossiter once. I know that she loves Vernon now. But you made certain grave charges against her, Mrs. Malverne, which you could not have made lightly. Did Miss Stair ever tell you she had known me?"

"Never. She never owned that she had even seen you."

"You spoke of a certain incident that occurred at Langworth—of a secret meeting there between Miss Stair and Vernon. Is there no possibility that you were mistaken?"

"None whatever," said the widow, positively. "Do you think I could make such a statement without certain knowledge? Sir Mark, if you have returned with any lingering affection for Joliette Stair, if you have come back with the hope of winning her love, pause where you are in your pursuit of her. She loves Vernon to idolatry. More, she is unworthy your ancient name, unworthy your esteem, unworthy the respect of any honourable person. Were I not so poor and helpless, nothing could induce me to spend one night under her roof."

Carried beyond the bounds of prudence by her secret envy and hatred of her young benefactress, Mrs. Malverne dared to give utterance to her secret convictions. She almost immediately repented her boldness, and added:

"I beg you to receive what I said as an inviolable confidence, Sir Mark. Pray do not get me into trouble with Miss Stair. I cannot bear to come to an open war with her, and I am so utterly dependent upon her bounty."

"I understand. Fear nothing from my indiscreetness, Mrs. Malverne. Your name shall not be brought into any discussion by me," said the baronet, gravely. "Indeed, I do not intend to enter into any discussion with Miss Stair. She is nothing—nothing whatever to me. I am nothing, and less than nothing to her."

Something in his looks or tones impressed Mrs. Malverne. She possessed keen intuitions, and saw as in a flash that Sir Mark Trebasil had by no means conquered his love for Joliette—that he was still her passionate lover. Such a love would interfere with her own plans and schemes. She was resolved to

win the baronet to herself. To do so she must utterly destroy his faith in Joliette. She did not shrink from the task. We will do her the justice, however, to declare that she actually believed Joliette to be utterly base and wicked—and this belief, easily seen to be genuine, was sure to give her words a thousand-fold more weight.

"I am glad that Miss Stair is nothing to you," said the widow, confidentially; "more glad than I can say. Oh, Sir Mark, think how I am placed! Obligated to countenance a woman whom I cannot respect! If I were a young girl nothing could persuade me to remain over night, but I am a widow, alone in the world, poor, defrauded of my rightful inheritance, and I must close my eyes to the evil that is going on around me. I cannot imagine why Miss Stair does not marry Vernon. One would almost fancy that some promise given before she knew him fetters her to another. Perhaps she is not altogether certain that she prefers him to Rossiter. Certainly she cannot be bound in any way—she cannot be prevented from marrying Vernon any day she pleases. I don't know what to think. I only know what I would not tell any one on earth but you, and that is that she is not an honourable woman."

Sir Mark Trebasil bit his lip savagely, and his face whitened strangely.

"Not an honourable woman!" he repeated. "Can you prove your words, Mrs. Malverne?"

The widow's pale eyes glittered, and she answered in an impressive whisper:

"Sir Mark, I can prove far more than I have hinted. I can prove that Joliette Stair is not worthy the name she bears—is not worthy the magnificent generosity of Madame Falconer; is not worthy of one's respect. You have but to watch her to assure yourself that I have not wronged her. Do not trust my words; trust only the evidence of your own eyes!"

Sir Mark looked stupified. He had believed Joliette false to him at heart, but Mrs. Malverne's words implied a deeper unworthiness, and his soul grew faint within him.

"I should prefer to see for myself," he said, huskily, after a pause. "But how shall I see?"

Mrs. Malverne reflected. She believed that Meggy Dunn had visited the abbey secretly upon the previous night, and that she would repeat the visit. She therefore answered:

"If you will watch the abbey at night for two or three nights, Sir Mark, you will learn for yourself what I dare not tell you."

Sir Mark's face flushed. The course proposed to him did not strike him as exactly honourable, but after all was not Joliette his own wife? Had he not a right to know of all her movements? If she walked with a lover about the abbey grounds at night, ought he not to know it? She was his—his own. He had a right to her secrets even, he said to himself, and there was no dishonour in watching her and learning how true she was to her marriage vows.

While he thus reasoned with himself, he turned away his face from the peering eyes of the widow, and his eyes roved about the room.

On every hand were the evidences of taste and wealth. And this lovely room, with the banks of flowers beyond, the entire abbey and all its outlying estates, belonged to Joliette, his own young wife, whom he had wedded for love in the Tyrol, only seventeen months ago.

She had no need of him or his. She was rich and independent. If he had not crossed her path at a period before she had fairly known her own heart she might be married now to the man of her choice. An indescribable bitterness convulsed his soul. He hated himself, even while a flood of passionate love for her filled his being.

Before he could question Mrs. Malverne farther the low, quick tapping of tiny boot-heels upon the marble pavement of the hall came to his hearing, and Joliette, small and dark, and brilliant in her vivid beauty, came into the room.

Sir Mark stood up, a blur obscuring his gaze.

He could make out an indistinct vision of a slender, fragile figure, dressed in deep mourning, with white crape frills about the slim throat, and with dusky hair crinkling above fair, pure brows, and then he encountered the gaze of Joliette's big black eyes, and their expression of cool and haughty disdain restored his self-possession.

He bowed low before her, and resumed his seat at her bidding.

Vernon strolled out from the conservatory.

Both Sir Mark and Mrs. Malverne watched Joliette narrowly as she greeted Vernon. The consciousness that her husband's eyes were upon her, the remembrance of his accusations against her on the previous evening in connection with Vernon, lent a sudden embarrassment to Joliette, who trembled and blushed vividly as she placed her hand in that of Sir Mark's cousin.

That tremulousness and that blush were proofs

corroborative of their suspicions in the minds of both the baronet and the widow.

Vernon seated himself near the fire. Joliette sank into the depths of a great crimson chair, and addressed polite remarks to the baronet, as if he had been a total stranger.

As may be supposed, this reception was scarcely agreeable to her husband. He chafed inwardly at her coolness. He was tempted once or twice to break out into invective and denunciation, to proclaim his exact relationship to her, but he managed to preserve his cool and calm demeanour, and to betray nothing of his inward agitation.

He made his call brief, however. The sight of the woman he loved with all his soul sitting before him, placid and courteous, unmoved and impassible, tortured him. He arose abruptly to take his leave.

"I hope, Sir Mark," said Mrs. Malverne, "that the old relations between the abbey and the castle are to be renewed. I hope you will come often to see us, in pity for our loneliness."

"Any friend of Mrs. Malverne's is always welcome here," said Joliette, quietly. "The abbey will always be open to you, Sir Mark."

"Thanks. I daresay I shall be here every day," responded the baronet. "I feel quite as if I had a right here," and he smiled oddly. "Permit me to bid you good morning."

He bowed low to each of the ladies and took his departure.

Almost immediately afterwards Vernon went away. Joliette arose to return to her own room.

"Is not Sir Mark charming?" inquired Mrs. Malverne, enthusiastically. "I had quite a visit with him before you came down, Miss Stair. Did I never tell you that he was an old lover of mine?" and she stole a sidelong glance at Joliette. "Well, it is so. And I have discovered this morning that it was my marriage that sent him forth a wanderer and an exile, to quote his own words."

Joliette paused as if transfixed.

"Did he say that?" she asked, in a low, strained voice.

"He did indeed," asserted the widow falsely, deeming it best to play her game boldly and to assert her claims upon the baronet. "I feel quite as if I had a right here. I am telling you this in confidence. You will not betray me?"

"Certainly not. Why should I betray you?"

"Then let me tell you all. He loves me and I love him. He is secretly miserable, or has been, but he shall find comfort and happiness in my love. He told me that my marriage had made him reckless that he had wandered over the Continent aimless and despairing, that once he had fancied a pretty face somewhere in Germany, but had soon tired of it, and that his heart is mine and mine alone!"

"He said all that?"

"Yes, and more. I cannot remember all he said. It is enough for me to know that, whatever infatuation he may have had for another, it was but temporary—that he loves me and has always loved me! Dear Sir Mark—"

Joliette waited to hear no more. With a swift rush she passed from the room, flashed up the stairs, and disappeared within her own rooms.

"Falsehood is my forte," thought the widow, with a triumphant smile. "I fancy that I have set those two against each other pretty skillfully. What I told Sir Mark against Miss Stair was truth. What I told her just now I intend to make truth. I can keep those two apart, and secure the baronet for myself. As to the hush-money I intend to exact from Miss Stair, I will wait a little and watch her yet more keenly. Perhaps I can discover even more against her. She will have two pairs of eyes upon her now. I wonder if Sir Mark Trebasil will watch the abbey to-night. And I wonder if Meggy Dunn will be here with the child!"

CHAPTER XXXII:

Soon after the departure of the visitors from Waldgrove Castle Charlotte Lyle and Adrian Rossiter returned to the abbey from their visit to the little frozen lake. The snow was falling more thickly now and the wind was rising. The crust of ice upon the lake was not sufficiently thick to bear the weight of skaters, and the project of skating was reluctantly given over for that day. The members of the household, including Joliette and Mrs. Malverne, assembled in the morning-room and amused themselves in various ways, enjoying a genial afternoon.

Towards dusk the party separated to dress for dinner, meeting again in the drawing-room a little before seven o'clock. The gas-lights were burning brilliantly, wax-candles shed their mellow glow upon the grand piano, the fires blazed redly in the grates, and fresh hothouse flowers crowded the costly vases upon the mantels and tables. The curtains were drawn before the windows, and the night and the storm were alike unseen and forgotten.

The ladies were in mourning toilets, with filmy lisse frills.

Mrs. Malverne had imparted an air of coquettishness to her toilet, and sparkled with jets, which were scattered over her hair and dress with indiscriminate profusion.

At seven o'clock the party went in to dinner. After dinner they returned to the drawing-room, where they were presently joined by Mr. Weston, who came in fresh from the outer air, his rosy cheeks glowing. He had spent the day at Langworth, engaged upon certain business pertaining to the abbey interests and had dined with a friend in the town. His business completed, he had preferred to return to the abbey for the night, having many anxieties in regard to Miss Stair and her possible meeting with Sir Mark Trebasil.

Joliette welcomed him warmly. The lawyer bestowed a keen and searching glance upon her face, as if to read in it traces of recent agitation, but it was very calm and sweet, with nothing of anxiety expressed in it.

"I was detained longer than I expected," he said to her, in a low tone, "but that tedious affair of the Brae Farm lease is finished with other business which has accumulated. I emptied your box at the post-office and have brought you the mail, which must otherwise have remain at Langworth until morning."

There was a letter or two for Joliette, one for Mrs. Malverne from her London dressmaker, and one for Charlot Lyle, who received it with an expression of surprise.

"It is postmarked Swanage, and I know no one at Swanage," she said to Adrian Rossiter, as they withdrew to the neighbourhood of the grand piano. "There must be some mistake. Yet my address is correct: 'Miss Charlot Lyle, Blair Abbey, Langworth, Cornwall.' Yes, it must be for me."

She tore open the large blue business-looking envelope, and brought to light a square blue letter-sheet upon which was inscribed an epistle of moderate length. She read this over two or three times before she could fully comprehend its meaning.

"You look fairly puzzled, Charlot," said Rossiter. "Is it a begging letter?"

"No. It is Joliette who receives those. This letter is from an uncle of mine, of whose existence I have always been vaguely conscious, but whom I have never seen. He seems suddenly to have discovered my existence."

"An uncle of yours, Charlot?" said Rossiter, perplexed. "Your uncles Trebasil are dead! Had your father a brother?"

"No, neither brother nor sister," answered Charlot, studying the letter again with fair, knitted brows. "This uncle was the uncle of my father—"

"Your great-uncle, then?"

"I suppose so. At the time of my father's marriage with Miss Charlot Trebasil my father's uncle was a post-captain, or some such thing, in the navy, with a large family of his own to educate and provide for. He is now a rear-admiral, it seems, and has retired from the service. He has lost his entire family, and now finds himself alone and desolate in his old age. But let me read you the letter."

Joliette had finished her letters and was conversing privately with Mr. Weston at a distant window; Mrs. Malverne was comparing with rapid intensity various samples of mourning silks which had been enclosed in her dressmaker's letter, and the lovers were as much alone as if they had been in another room. Miss Lyle read her letter aloud, in a low voice that scarcely broke the stillness.

"Petrel House, near Swanage, Dorsetshire,
"January 23rd, 1873.

"MISS CHARLOT LYLE.—MADAM: I trust that you will excuse this late recognition of your existence upon the part of one who should have become your guardian and protector from the hour of your father's death. I have brief excuse to offer for my neglect, I knew very little of your father during his later days. I was absent from England when he died, and when I returned a year later, and hearing of Graham Lyle's death, made inquiries after Graham Lyle's children, I learned that he had left but one child, a daughter, and that she was safely sheltered in the house of Madame Faulkner, an eccentric and childless old lady, who petted her young companion, and treated her with maternal care and kindness. Therefore, I concluded that you had no need of my protection.

"I have lately heard of Madame Faulkner's death. The news comes to me when I am myself grievously afflicted. I am a battered old hulk, that has withstood the storms of sixty-eight years. My wife died several years ago. My children have gone down one by one into the great ocean of eternity, and only month since my youngest daughter—my last surviving child, followed her brothers and sisters to the great haven of everlasting peace. I am alone in the world. My house is empty. You also are alone. We two are

kindred. Come to me, Charlot Lyle, and you shall be to me as a daughter. If I like you—and I think I shall, from what I have learned of your womanly independence and efforts at self-support—and if you remain with me while I live, I will leave to you at my death my little property.

"I shall not long tax your kindness and sympathy if you decide to come to me. I am ill with gout. I am well-nigh helpless, and alone with hired servants. Will you come to me? If you decide in the negative you need not write. If you conclude to come, inform me by telegraph, and come by first train after receipt of this letter. If I am to have you here at all, I want you immediately. To-day is mine. Next week I may be dead.

"I am, dear madam, obediently yours,

"JOHN BOKUN, late of H. M. R. N."

Miss Lyle folded the letter and restored it to the envelope, saying:

"The letter seems to me full of pathos, Adrian. Think of this old gentleman ill and tended only by hired servants. I am not needed here; I will go to him. Do you not think I ought?"

Rossiter could not gainsay his honest convictions, but he replied, gravely:

"You must judge for yourself of your duty in the matter, Charlot. Joliette does not need you here, and your great-uncle has actual need of you, but you must consider the case fully. He may be impatient, irritable, harsh; he may overtax your strength in many ways."

"Alone and nearly helpless," said Charlot, gently. "Think of that, Adrian! I can bear his impatience, but if I cannot I can return to the abbey. I think I ought to go."

"Then you must go, of course; but one thing must be understood, dear; our marriage is not to be deferred, even upon Admiral Bokun's account, beyond our year of mourning for Madame Falconer. You must tell him immediately upon your arrival at Petrel House of our engagement of marriage. Will you agree to this?"

Charlot assented. Then, as Joliette drew near, Miss Lyle read her letter aloud, and announced her intention of visiting her great-uncle.

As may be supposed, her resolve created quite a little excitement and interest; but Joliette's opinion, which Miss Lyle solicited, coincided with Charlot's.

"If I were in your place, Charlot," said Joliette, affectionately, "I should go."

"If I go, I must go immediately," said Miss Lyle. "I will set out upon my journey in the morning."

"Mrs. Gorset shall accompany you and see you safely in your uncle's house, Charlot," said Miss Stair.

"And as I am to return to London to-morrow," said Mr. Weston, "I will take Swanage in my way and act as your escort, Miss Lyle. It is all settled, you see."

Charlot and Rossiter made the most of the remainder of the evening. The latter announced his intention of visiting Petrel House very frequently. The former promised that if her uncle proved too exacting or irritable, or if her stay at his house proved very unpleasant, she would return to Blair Abbey, but she made a vow in her own mind "to bear all things and endure all things" rather than desert her helpless relative in his desolate illness and age.

At the usual hour the party separated, retiring to their rooms. Mrs. Bittle, Joliette's own waiting-woman, was summoned to pack Miss Lyle's boxes, late as was the hour, and Joliette remained with her friend until the second and final box was corded and ready for transportation.

It was midnight when the young mistress of the Abbey returned to her own apartments, and her light burned for hours later, streaming out with sickly yellow lustre into the gray and snowy night.

There was one who watched it from the terraces below with eager, jealous eyes. Sir Mark Trebasil, acting upon the advice of Mrs. Malverne, walked to and fro in the shadows in front of the abbey, with haggard face and restless tread, expecting to see his young wife come forth to take her part in some secret interview; but she did not come. He felt a great longing to penetrate to her private rooms. What was she doing? Why did her lights burn so late? Perhaps she was ill! He was her husband, and he had a right to know if she were ill. He mounted the great stone porch, and laid hold upon the knocker, but paused, anathematizing himself for his folly, and descended the steps, muttering:

"Am I mad, that I should arouse her household because of my senseless fears for her health? She is fretting up there, perhaps, because of the fetters that bind her to me; because she is not free to marry whom she will. Poor girl! poor Joliette! I love her to madness, and she hates me!"

He continued his restless march until after the

stable-clock had struck the hour of twelve. Then he hurried homewards through the park.

The next morning Mr. Weston had a long private interview with Miss Stair, and soon afterwards departed in the carriage with Charlot Lyle and Mrs. Gorset for Langworth. Rossiter accompanied them to the railway station and returned alone in the carriage to the abbey.

There was no visitor from the castle upon that day. During the night Sir Mark Trebasil watched upon the terrace for some proof of Joliette's faithlessness, but discovered none.

"I will watch one more night—only one more," he said to himself, as he walked homewards after midnight. "If I discover nothing then, I shall think that Joliette is on her guard. Helena Malverne can have no object in deceiving me. She must have told me truth!"

The next day found Charles Vernon at Blair Abbey. His surprise may be imagined when he learned of Charlot Lyle's departure. He made very particular inquiries as to her destination, and was very thoughtful throughout his visit.

He had had a long conversation with his valet and confederate during the previous night, and both had come to the conclusion that some decided step should be taken to advance their interests. It was true that Harold Park was very near unto death. At any moment the news of his demise might be expected. It seemed desirable to these two villains to make farther progress; to see their way clearer; to remove Charlot Lyle, in short, without farther delay. An interval of months had elapsed since the last attempt had been made to cut short her young life. It was time to make a more effectual attempt now. The pair had even arranged details, but their plans were interrupted by her departure.

"Perhaps it's as well, after all, though," thought Vernon. "I'll talk it over with Gannard. He will devise some scheme to rid us of her without our incurring the actual guilt of murder. I am incapable of murder, yet there are ways of destroying her as effectual as the use of knife or bowl."

He made a lengthened call, and went away.

That evening Sir Mark Trebasil resumed his secret vigil in the grounds of Blair Abbey.

The night was clear and pleasant, with a crisp air and the soft light of stars. The baronet paced to and fro amid the shadows of the trees until eleven o'clock, but no one came down the wide stone steps to keep trust upon the terrace. The lights were extinguished in the drawing-room and beamed brightly from the upper rooms.

"I am a fool to think Joliette would come out here upon open ground," thought Sir Mark. "Any servant might see her leave the house by the front door. She would steal out at a side entrance. She would be in the garden, perhaps, or in the Monk's Walk around by the ruins. Why did I not think of the haunted walk before? The blood-curdling stories that are told of it would keep away the servants, and Joliette herself is too enlightened to heed the rubbish about the headless monk. She would meet Vernon there if anywhere."

Acting upon his new suspicion, he crept around the angle of the ruins and found himself in the grim darkness of the Monk's Walk. He glided down its length, keeping close to the trees.

When he had arrived nearly opposite the little hidden postern-door he paused, hearing a rustling in the ivy leaves covering the towering wall. His heart seemed to stop beating. He listened with his whole being. And he heard from somewhere among the ruins, from the little open postern-door in reality, but he did not know of that door's existence, a sweet voice—Joliette's voice—calling softly:

"Adrian! Adrian!"

A figure started up from the gloom a few paces distant, and Rossiter's voice called out in a shrill whisper:

"Yes, Joliette; I am here."

And before Sir Mark could stir Rossiter dashed past him, and disappeared within the ruins. The postern-door, its hinges well oiled, closed noiselessly upon Joliette and Rossiter, who crept up the narrow stair and entered the secret suite of rooms where the baronet's son lived his little hidden life.

And Sir Mark Trebasil stood without in the gloom, absolutely transfixed, a statue of horror and despair.

(To be continued.)

THE FLIGHT OF BIRDS.—Professor Guthrie, in relation to the hovering of birds, states that, when the bird desires to hover over a given spot, it moves by an expenditure of muscular force until it finds a region where one layer of air is moving, say, from right to left, and another from left to right. Then placing its body and most of its right wing in the lower stratum, it tilts its body so that some of its left wing is in the upper layer. By altering its height, by turning

one wing in its socket, and probably also by turning some of the pen feathers on their axes, and altering the inclination of its wings, the bird so governs the pressure on the two wings that the sum of the vertical revolved parts is equal to the bird's weight, while the horizontal revolved parts are equal and opposite.

SYRENE.

I am a clergyman of the Church of England. My flock does not dwell in a city, but about half a dozen miles from an old cathedral town in the southern part of England. If I write this story more minutely than would seem natural, considering that a number of years have elapsed since the incidents occurred, it is because that I kept a diary of all the events which happened that concerned me and my friends—a practice which has been to me a source of mingled pain and pleasure. Now for the first time I relate what was written in my journal many years ago. One Sunday, as the last words of my sermon left my lips, I happened to notice in one of the pews near the door, a veiled figure, apparently listening intently. It was a graceful figure, with a proud poise of head and shoulders, and there was a soft gleam of eyes behind the veil.

I saw, and for a moment forgot, but after my prayer was ended, ere I pronounced the benediction, my glance again wandered towards the veiled lady. There is much, sometimes, in an attitude; and I fancied I detected in hers a more than usual interest in the services, and somehow, as I said the benediction, my heart most earnestly invoked the blessing on her especially. The people moved slowly out, as they do in warm summer days. When I had changed my gown and walked into the yard, though most of the congregation lingered near, she was not visible. She returned to my thoughts often during the week—why, I could not tell; for there had been many strangers who strayed in summer into the little old stone church, and unknown ladies among them—but they had never occupied my thoughts as this stranger did. The next Sunday I thought of her, though having no idea that I should see her again; but when my service was half-spoken a lady glided noiselessly in and sat down close to the door. The sweet and tender words of our Lord greeted the stranger. Never had I prayed more sincerely that He would bless than I did then. I felt that she needed Him more than I knew of.

Again she was gone before I left the church; not a flutter of her garments was visible in road or field path.

"You were truly earnest this afternoon," said my wife. "It did my heart good to hear you."

"I am sometimes discontented that I cannot feel as deeply always; but it is not in humanity to be thus," I said.

Then after a moment I added:

"My sympathies were vividly aroused this afternoon. I should be surprised if I should ever learn that she who awakened them was in no need of sympathy. Did you notice a lady far back in the church who came in late? A lady in some sort of gray, and who kept her veil down?"

"I did not see her; I sit so far in front, you know, that I could not have seen her," was the reply, followed by a question concerning her appearance.

My answer was interrupted by the entrance of my nephew, a young man who had been two years in the army in India, and was now at home to recuperate from the effects of a wound received there. Captain Arthur Campbell was a tall, blonde and tanned young fellow, with fiery and soft blue eyes and golden beard. I had no son save Arthur, who was early an orphan, and whom I had reared from childhood; and I knew that he loved and confided in me as if I were in reality his father.

He sat down on a low seat by the open window, leaning his head against the sash, and looking thoughtfully out towards the crimsoning west.

"Musing of thy last campaign, Arthur?" at last asked my wife, "and home-sick to get back again?"

"Of no such warlike scenes," he said, raising his head and speaking with animation. "I was thinking of this afternoon, and the lady I saw in church."

"You saw her, then?" I exclaimed. "I was more conscious of her presence than any other in the church. She was there last Sunday."

"I did not see her until to-day," said Arthur, "and after the service I hurried out near her, for no other reason than because she had struck me with some kind of interest. She walked rapidly along the path at the back of the church that leads to the little gate; I sauntered after, the rest of the people going by the front way. She tried to open the gate, but it held fast. I advanced and opened it for her; it

resisted, and while I pushed at it a puff of wind raised her veil, and I saw her face."

Arthur turned his face towards the window, as if he wished no other face to come between him and this.

"It was a beautiful face, with eyes of transparent luminous darkness, straight black brows, and proud self-reliant lips. The veil was instantly lowered by a slender ungloved hand, upon which diamonds flashed. The gate was opened; she thanked me by a bow and walked on. If it were wrong to watch where she went, I did that wrong."

"And where was it?" eagerly asked my wife, a romance already in her head.

"To that house on the hill, half a mile from here, whose turrets we see from this window."

"But that belongs to Mr. Daniel," I said.

"I know it, and I think she is a Jewess," was Arthur's reply.

My wife's eager expression changed to one of doubt and disappointment.

"A Jewess may be beautiful, but there is no faith in one," she said.

"You have not seen this woman," remarked Arthur. "No mouth with that kind of pride about it could ever belong to an untrustworthy person."

"Oh, the power of beauty!" laughed my wife.

I rose and looked over the irregular towers of the house at which my nephew was gazing.

The twilight had deepened, and through one of the narrow windows burned a steady light. It was it that room that the peasant said the Jew tried all sorts of unholy experiments; but my idea, founded upon observation of his face and habits, was that he was a severe student.

There were two Jew brothers to whom the house belonged; but I had never seen them, as they rarely left London.

He who kept the house for them was an old man, stern and venerable of aspect, with nothing of the characteristic cunning in his face.

I do not know that the mansion ever contained any woman save the housekeeper and her assistant, both of whom I had seen in the garden at evening, sitting in picturesque silence, enjoying the warm air.

"It is not the power of beauty with me," I said, at last; "for I have never seen this lady's face. Still, I have an intuition that she is a true woman, that she possesses true nobility of soul."

Arthur gave me a grateful glance, while my wife replied:

"You speak like a woman, without reason and only from instinct."

In all that which followed my nephew made me his confidant, so far as the sensitive spirit of man permits; and I could easily imagine the rest from his own manner and face, so well did I know him.

For several days nothing more was seen or heard from the unknown woman. Captain Campbell wandered round the country as usual—oftenest with his rifle, but sometimes with his dog and a book.

A day's rambling brought him back, at last, to a little wooded hill, from whose summit could be seen distant glimpses of a smooth sea lying in the calm of a ruddy gloaming. Campbell put down his gun and leaned against a tree, his eyes bringing to his soul the sense of the beauty of the place and time. A couple of partridges lay on the ground at his feet, his dog lying with nose very near them, and with alert eyes roving among the trees in search of another victim.

Suddenly there was a whirl and flutter a few yards away, and a solitary bird rose among the bushes. The dog's ears sprang erect and Campbell grasped his gun, firing precipitately at the bird, which uttered a scream and flew away unhurt. But at the same instant a moan pierced the quiet air. Arthur saw the movement of some dun-coloured drapery in the direction whence the bird had risen. He sprang forward, his face white, a pang in his heart. At the root of a tree, sunk down in sudden weakness, he saw the girl he had met in the churchyard. Her hat had fallen off, her dark hair hung loose on her forehead; her hands were clasped to her side, and already a dull stain was showing itself on her clothes.

"Oh, what have I done?" burst from Arthur's colourless lips, as he saw this girl, whose face and figure had so lingered in his memory.

"You have shot me," she said, with a sort of look in her face that made Arthur think, disturbed as he was, that she did not hold her life so sweet that this wound made her fear for it.

She met his glance with a deprecatory smile, and said:

"I know it was accident; be not disturbed."

Arthur threw himself on his knees beside her, and exclaimed:

"I would rather have died! I should not have suffered so much as at this moment."

His fiery earnestness, his deep glances pierced the heart of the girl with pity.

"I forgive you; you have done me no harm," she said.

Her voice was sweet, with a sort of quelled pride in it that matched the expression of her mouth.

He put his arm round her to support her. In looking at them one would have supposed that it was he who had been hurt, save for the blood which stained the white fingers of the girl.

"I will carry you down the hill and to the house," he said, rising with her in his arms, his face flushing as her hair caressed it.

She withdrew from his arms, saying:

"I believe I can walk, with your support."

But the first few steps proved that she could not. Arthur thought she would die, so deathly grew her face, so short the sobbing breaths between her parted lips. After a moment she recovered somewhat, and he took her in his arms, saying, authoritatively:

"It is I who have done this; it is my right to carry you."

Slowly down the hill he went, the dog following sorrowfully, his eyes fixed intelligently on the pallid face of the girl.

To Arthur Campbell those moments were the gate through which he passed to another life. His chivalrous heart flamed at contact with that heart which throbbed against his; the dreams he had dreamed since he first saw that face flashed into reality with that face on his shoulder, its lips sighing over his, the languid glances of its eyes melting into his soul. And death so near! Already the idea of her death was blackness to him—and by his hand, too!

He stopped one moment to rest. His dog licked the hand of the girl which hung down, looking wistfully at the two. That action brought moisture into the girl's eyes.

"You are tired," she murmured, faintly. "Put me down."

Arthur averted his eyes, as he answered:

"We are coming to a rough place; I wish to go as easily as possible."

He wondered if she noticed the tremor which he could not help betraying in his voice; but it was not fatigue alone that caused it.

At last they reached the foot of the hill, and emerged from the wood. On the slope of another hill, but a few yards away, stood the house of Mr. Daniel.

"Carry me there," said the girl.

Arthur did not need that request, and blushed to think that he had followed her to discover where she stayed.

Sarah, the housekeeper, discovered them before they reached the gate, and she ran out, uttering doleful cries.

"Be quiet?" cried Arthur, sternly, "and lead the way to the lady's room."

Silenced, she hastened through the court, and at the door they were met by Daniel himself.

"Syrene!" he exclaimed. "How are you hurt?" Then he extended his arms, saying: "I will take her now, young man."

Arthur pushed by, saying:

"I am stronger; I will carry her the rest of the way."

The old man turned and followed them, and Arthur laid the girl tenderly on the bed to which Sarah had directed him.

"I will go for a surgeon," he said, his limbs vibrating, his head pulsating from the long exertion, for he was not yet restored to his full strength.

In ten minutes he returned with the surgeon. He waited in the hall, while the man he had brought ascended the stairs, his case of instruments in his hand.

Arthur leaned, panting, against the wall, his eyes fixed on the door through which the surgeon had disappeared.

His thoughts rose in such turbulent swells that he could make nothing coherent of them, only the wild hope of overpowering earnestness that the girl would recover.

In less than five minutes time the door at the head of the staircase opened, and the surgeon appeared, his hat on his head, his box in his hand. Arthur sprang forward to meet him, as he deliberately descended the stairs.

"You have been very quick. How is she?" he asked.

"I haven't seen her," replied the surgeon, angrily.

Arthur's hopes sank.

"What do you mean?" he cried, half disposed to be indignant with the man.

"They wouldn't let me in to see her. That old man said they needed none of my assistance."

The surgeon opened the door but Arthur detained him. He was himself determined not to quit the house until he had heard again from the girl.



[A RANDOM SHOT.]

"Are they to have no medical aid for her?" he asked.

"None that I know of," was the reply. "The wise Daniel will probably administer unto her," with which ironical sentence the surgeon strode across the court.

Arthur waited, trying to possess his soul in patience. Twilight had deepened; soft warm stars came out in the summer heavens. An evening bird piped in the woody hill down which he had borne the girl he had wounded; the fragrant shrubs and flowers in the garden near became yet sweeter as they felt the humid breath of night. In that perfume Arthur detected the rich fragrance of a cape jasmine, and his eyes discovered its gleamy whiteness in a pot among the greenery. The flower became a part of his remembrance of that night and of that woman. Never after did that perfume, subtle and sweet, fail to bring to his heart a thrill of pain, of love and of regret.

In the house all was still, save a distant and faint clatter of dishes from the servant in the kitchen. The upper part of the building was quiet—so utterly soundless that it was almost maddening to him who waited.

An hour passed; the kitchen noise had ceased—now it was motionless throughout the mansion. In the hall a huge clock had tolled the hour.

Arthur threw himself on the threshold of the door. His dog, which had not left him, whined faintly, and thrust its nose into his hand. Arthur looked down at him and patted his head, saying, softly:

"We'll wait, friend. They'll have to shut this door, I should think—otherwise we'll keep guard here all night."

Two more hours had struck, when a faint footfall came down the stair. It was the old man, in his dressing-gown and woollen slippers. He held a candle in his hand, and started slightly as its light revealed the figure sitting motionless in the doorway. At that moment Arthur heard him and turned, rising to his feet.

"Thou art very patient, young man," said Daniel,

coldly, fitting a key into the keyhole of the open door.

"I am very anxious. Will you tell me how is the young lady?" asked Arthur, with a calmness that the old man's manner had called into effect.

"She is quite comfortable," said Daniel, waiting to shut the door.

But Arthur did not move.

"Do you think she will recover?" asked Arthur, in an even tone, his burning eyes fixed on the old man's face.

"I think it probable."

Arthur stepped down from the threshold, but held the door back, while he said:

"I am the unhappy cause of this accident; I think my persistence is therefore pardonable. It is natural that I should wish to know concerning the lady's illness. I shall come to-morrow to inquire of you."

Daniel manifested some surprise; he had evidently not known before who had wounded his niece—for the lady was his niece.

"That fact shall win my pardon for thy intrusion," he said, more mildly. "But now go home; she is not in any present danger."

A fervent "Thank you" left the young man's lips as he stepped from the door.

Daniel shaded the candle with his hand and looked after the young man, seeing how nobly he trod, how lithe and graceful was his figure; and as he looked the wrinkles in his forehead deepened, his mouth curved with anger and pitying contempt. As Arthur left the court he cast a backward glance up at the house, and saw the gray old man, with the yellow candlelight streaming over him, peering after him. It was a lurid picture that made a chill strike through Arthur's frame.

The door shut with a slam, and through the stillness Arthur heard the key click.

The quiet of the night, instead of soothing him, seemed to add to the restlessness that was within him. The fresh air was like wine to him. He

walked impatiently up and down the lawn in front of the house, and at last, who had been up late in his study, saw his figure, and went out to him. Where was my careless, nonchalant boy, whose free gaiety had been so sure an index to a heart at ease? I felt that I had lost that boy for ever. In his place I found this pale man, with gleaming eyes and restless step. He talked long with me, and at last went up to his room, to troubled dreams and light slumber.

The next day he went over to inquire concerning the wounded girl. He could not gain access to Mr. Daniel—to nobody but Sarah, who replied, shortly, that she thought the young lady would get well. Arthur lingered round the house, hoping he might catch a glimpse of Daniel, but no one appeared. The garden lay quiet in the sunshine, the house still as if uninhabited. The young man's spirit fretted and chafed at this ignoring of his anxiety concerning the Jewess. Every day his resolution to break down all barriers they could raise around her grew stronger. The impulsive, headstrong spirit that had always characterized him was not one to submit to anything but an utter impossibility.

It was almost a week since the accident. Arthur had only seen Sarah, who had vouchsafed the most unsatisfactory answers, evidently angry with this young Gentle who dared to be interested in her mistress. Wandering at twilight, as was now his habitual custom, within sight of the house, Arthur saw the old man in the garden, walking with pensive steps among the shrubbery. A moment after and Campbell had bounded over the wall, and was stepping rapidly up to the old man, who looked at him in surprise. Arthur took off his cap before the gray hairs of Daniel.

"I beg you to tell me if the young lady is recovering who had the misfortune to be hurt by my carelessness," he said, respectfully.

"She is recovering," was the reply; then, after a searching look at Arthur's face, he continued: "And I advise you to discontinue your inquiries. She is out of danger. Be satisfied; intrude no more upon our solitude."

He turned away, having uttered those words with such quiet, piercing contempt and pity that Arthur's very fingers tingled with rage. He strode out of the garden, no whit sorry, however, that he had at last discovered Daniel.

I missed that graceful figure and intent attitude when I rose to preach the next Sunday. My thoughts often wandered to the girl shut up in the house on the hill. Was it possible any doubts of the truth of her faith had penetrated to her thoughts?

Several weeks passed. A cousin of my wife was spending a month with us—a gay, dashing girl, who, I hoped, would rally my moody nephew. He attended her gallantly; but in my secret soul I am afraid it was rather a bore to him. I caught Mabel Channing's quick-seeing gray eyes directed questioningly towards him, as if wondering what was the cause of his well-concealed preoccupation. One day she discovered.

After a long canter over the beach the two returned home by Daniel's house.

"What picturesque loneliness!" exclaimed Mabel.

"What place is it?"

"The man who lives there is named Daniel," replied Arthur, his eyes roaming eagerly over the windows and grounds. By some means he had kept tolerably well informed of the progress of Syrene's health, and he knew she walked about the house.

"Daniel? Is he a Jew, then?" asked Miss Channing.

"Yes, a genuine Jew, with a flowing white beard," was Arthur's light reply.

"Can we ride upon that path?" she asked, pointing to a path nearer the garden wall. "I should like to ride close to those drooping trees."

"We'll try it; it appears to me part of the public way."

Their horses walked slowly under the trees, sniffing the fragrant air, well satisfied with their road. Suddenly Miss Channing drew rein, and exclaimed, under her breath:

"How beautiful! Oh, Captain Campbell, an escaped sultana! But she is ill."

Captain Campbell's heart throbbed heavily, he knew so well who was the escaped sultana. He looked over the wall in the direction towards which his companion's eyes were turned. Underneath some tall white flowering shrub sat Syrene. A crimson shawl had been spread on the grass, and she was leaning her arm on a crimson cushion. Her dark hair was but loosely bound, her face was intensely pale, somewhat relieved, however, by the vivid colour of her dress and draperies. Her eyebrows seemed more exquisitely pencilled than ever, so white was her forehead. Her large eyes were looking vaguely forward, her mouth had a curve of fascinating sadness in its fiery lips. It was strange that

one so weak-looking, so strengthless, should still have so much of quiescent fire and force about her.

Arthur Campbell devoured her with his gaze. His eyes joined the feeling that was in his soul; a blush of earnestness suffused his face.

Miss Channing turned to see if he saw the lady. In that revelation a bitterness entered her heart: for she felt the vague hopes she had cherished struck down.

At that moment Syrene turned her eyes towards them. Arthur raised his hat and bowed low, and Miss Channing saw the colour rise to that marble face.

"They rode away, Arthur doing his best to appear careless, and thinking he succeeded, which he did not. 'A pretty romance!' said Mabel Channing, to herself.

The next night at twilight while Syrene was walking in solitary slowness in the garden, an eager step approached along the walk, and a deprecatory musical voice said:

"I earnestly beg your pardon; but I could not resist the temptation to come in, when I saw you walking here."

It was impossible to be seriously offended with such a face and such a voice. Syrene vibrated—perhaps with the surprise alone, for she was yet very weak.

"Grant me pardon, or I must immediately leave you," he said, looking with fiery eyes at those drooping lids.

"I pardon you, but you must go," she said, raising her glance for a moment to his. Did she know what effect that glance had upon him?

"Give me a few moments. Remember my anxiety about you," he said, rapidly. "Your pale face is a reproach to me. Are you getting well?"

"Your anxiety is without cause," she answered; "I am recovering."

"May I not take you to ride—or to sail?" he asked. "It will be food for you. You are too confined here."

She felt his vehemence more than she perceived it, for he compelled himself to speak calmly.

"Oh, no," she exclaimed. "You are very kind, but I cannot go. Indeed, I am getting along rapidly."

"And you will allow me to do nothing for you? You are very cruel to me; you will not permit me to make any atonement."

Arthur's tone was almost quivering with the intensity of his feeling. Since he had brought Syrene home wounded his love had grown with the rapidity and strength of some Southern plant—but to live a longer life than is usual to sudden growth. He feared every moment the intrusion of Sarah or the old man—he counted the seconds he should see her.

"Must I reiterate that there is no need of atonement?" she responded. "You have needlessly troubled yourself about me. Good-night."

She turned from him.

"Will you not give me a hand touch in token of forgiveness for my intrusion?" he said, in a low tone of respectful entreaty.

Syrene did not hesitate, but extended her hand, which was clasped by the burning fingers of Campbell, and with such a look that the girl, as she thought of it, felt as if he had pressed his lips to her fingers.

Arthur passed out of sight among the trees. What fiery, potent prince was this come to make the days seem different to her?

Syrene stood alone in the warm, perfumed garden. Did not some passionate thrill from the heart of Campbell still linger with her, and stir her pulses to a strange beat? She went slowly to the house, meeting Daniel at the door.

"Thou art better, child," he said, "the colour begins to come on thy cheeks."

Syrene went quickly by him and up to her room.

The next Sunday I noticed her in church, but she escaped my eyes and the swifter ones of my nephew. Neither of us saw her after service. Impetuous, resolved, deeply in love, refusing to think of any future—would not such a young man gain admittance to the presence of the girl he loved?

So it went on for several weeks. Sometimes Syrene would shut herself in the house, and not stir into the garden even. But who could do that in summer weather? And that was the only means by which she could avoid her lover. She had almost entirely given up walking in the fields and woods as she had formerly done. Did Campbell have an unconscious ally in her heart that made her thus fearful of meeting him?

One day Arthur galloped by the old man's house, his dog with him, evidently bound for a long ride.

Syrene, from her window, caught a glimpse of him as he disappeared round a curve in the road, and immediately donned her hat and shawl for a ramble in a favourite wood. Imprisoned as she, had been

she felt a sense of freedom and enjoyment not lately known. Ere she returned some impulse led her to the little hill where happened the accident. Secure from interruption, she sat down at the foot of a tree, took off her hat, and allowed her shawl to slip in indolent folds from her shoulders.

Some dream of vague happiness must have blessed her heart, for the rays of the sun grew horizontal—barring with their light the aisles of the trees.

A horseman rode fast along the narrow road at the foot of the hill. Some sudden freak, or it may be a fortunate intuition, made him suddenly draw rein and spring from his horse. He left the well-trained animal without fastening, and climbed the hill, his eyes fixed absently on the ground; apparently he had no particular purpose in thus seeking the spot for ever memorable to him.

Syrene heard a rustling of boughs, and Campbell's dog sprang to her side. She had not time to rise before his master pushed eagerly forward, an exclamation of surprise and delight on his lips.

"Do not rise—nay, I entreat you," he said, laying a hand lightly on her shoulder to prevent her moving, and sitting down beside her. "I think Heaven is smiling upon me in compensation for a hard duty it has just given me to perform. I came up here for one last look at the place where I first saw you."

His glowing eyes were upon her, his head bent forward, his breath swept her face—she might easily have heard the heavy throbbing at his heart had she been calm as she endeavoured to be.

Campbell felt that the hour of his fate had come. He would rather have died than gone away without seeing her again. Heaven had indeed smiled upon him in granting him this opportunity.

Syrene felt the passion and the sadness of his words; she would not offer any commonplace remark in reply to what he had said; had she wished to do so she could hardly have done so in the appropriate voice. She remained silent, feeling with exquisite pain the penetrating blue eyes.

"It may be that I have offended you in thus persistently seeking you," said Arthur, "for you have always avoided me."

He began quite calmly, but he could not go on thus. An ungovernable impulse took possession of him. He leaned forward and took that dear white hand which lay in her lap. He pressed it to his lips and his heart, while he uttered something of the love that controlled him.

"If you bid me be silent, I cannot obey you!" he exclaimed. "To-morrow I leave England. Oh, let me carry one word of kindness from you—for I love you—love you as you can never be loved again—with the strength of death and life!"

Her fingers, held tightly to his heart, felt its violent beating. She trembled in silence.

Campbell drew yet nearer. "Syrene!" he murmured, all the tenderness of his soul finding utterance in that word.

She raised her eyes to his. Was ever glance so dear—so full of strongest love?

He did not take her in his arms; that mutual gaze was all of happiness.

Then a shadow came over her face.

"Heaven pity us!" she whispered, "I am a Jewess—in name, at least."

"Heaven shall bless us," replied Arthur, having no thought of obstacles he could not overcome. "I will return and claim you. Is it true, as I have sometimes fancied, that you find pleasure in listening to the services of our religion? It was at our church that I first saw you."

"It is true. A long time ago I became dissatisfied with the Jewish faith. Two years ago, when, accidentally, I heard your uncle preach." A faint shudder shook her as she said, "But you cannot know how dreadful is the position of one who abjures the Jewish belief."

"My wife shall believe in what creed she pleases," said Arthur, with mingled tenderness and indignation.

Syrene looked at him with a sort of sorrowful pride. She knew too well the difficulty of her position to view it with such a triumphant surety as he did. Even in that moment of wonderful happiness she felt the vague shadow of some evil to come—a shadow which she could not dissipate. In the radiance of this smile she was conscious of the frown of some direful fate.

"It is hard to leave you," said Arthur, his bright face becoming a little clouded, "but I shall look to my return. You will be with me—for have you not said that you love me?"

Syrene's face grew paler.

The thought of his departure was death to her; in his absence she saw more than mere absence; that could be borne, for love annihilated space. So terrible was the weight of despondency that oppressed her that she could not speak of it. She only uttered some entreating murmur for him to remain.

Could she have seen Campbell's face, she would have known yet more vividly the power of any request of hers.

He felt that if life alone were at stake he would willingly have sacrificed it—but it was honour that bade him go. His face grew colourless as he saw the anguish of love and doubt of her future in the eyes of the girl.

"It is imperative that I go," he said, at last. "I am ordered to rejoin my regiment, but I swear to you that I will sell my commission at the first opportunity. Oh, it kills me to go!"

That voice of suffering love recalled to Syrene all the pride and fortitude of her nature. Her tone did not tremble in its music when she spoke again. She resolutely put from her the gloom she feared.

The two sat there until the gathering dusk warned them homeward. By the garden wall they paused for the farewell that was to be their last. The stars, just glittering in the heavens, wore sweet smiles upon them—no cloud obscured the calm blue. The wind was only a musky breath of summer.

Campbell held fast the slender hands that were so dear to him. It was dreadful to leave her.

"Mine, always," he murmured, with that look which his eyes never could give another.

He could not know that it was the last time he should ever see her, the last touch her lips should ever give him. He turned and walked rapidly down the path, not looking back for fear he could not go.

Before the dawn had fully come the next day he was sailing from the English shore.

I now turn more exclusively to the pages of my own journal. I have made use of many entries in the journal of my nephew, and in my desire to portray correctly the characters of Arthur and Syrene, have woven those words with my own.

About a week after the departure of Arthur I discovered that Syrene had returned to her home in the vicinity of London. The days sped on in the quiet routine of our life. We had received one letter from Arthur on his way to Calcutta—then at last, at the end of a year, another, saying, that in all probability he should arrange to leave the army, and come home before six months were out. It rejoiced my heart to hear it. I confidently looked forward to a happy future for him and his wife. Then would Syrene be removed from the unhappy influences under which I knew she dwelt.

It was late one night about a year after Arthur had left England; I was in my study much later than usual, having been engaged on some theological work I was preparing.

The study was in a semi-detached wing of the house, so that it might be as retired as possible. I had just laid down my pen, and was thinking of retiring, when in the utter quiet of the night there sounded a distinct knock on the outer door of the study—a door opening on to a narrow walk leading down through my garden into the road. The door was very rarely used by any one save myself, and I was the more surprised on that account.

I knew of no one ill in the parish who would be likely to send for me, but concluded it was to visit some sick bed, as I walked down the stairs to the door.

Two men stood waiting, and to my polite request to know what they wanted one of them stepped nearer and asked permission for a short interview with me as they could not very well state their errand there.

Intensely surprised, I invited them into the house. By the light of my lamp I saw they were tall, elegantly formed, with well-trimmed dark hair and beard, and piercing dark eyes. Very handsome men and very gentlemanly. They appeared to me to be brothers. The one who had spoken, and who seemed to be chief speaker, declined my invitation to them to be seated. He leaned carelessly against the mantelshelf, then asked if my name was not—mentioning my name. I bowed and he continued:

"I thought I had made no mistake. We came here to request you to visit a person who is very earnest in the desire to see you."

Though I felt there was something mysterious in the affair, I replied directly:

"I will go."

He smiled a little incredulously, and remarked:

"But there are conditions."

"Name them," I said, a trifle impatiently.

"You are to be blindfolded the moment you step from your own door, the blind not to be removed until you arrive at your destination; the same when you return. You are to promise that you will never reveal anything you shall see at the place where we shall take you."

"Your request is absurd," I said. "We do not live in the middle ages, when mystery and crime flourished more than plain-dealing and virtue."

"Do not interrupt me," coolly continued the man.

"You are to receive on your return the sum of five hundred pounds—and we pledge to you that no harm shall come to you."

"I do not fear harm," I said—and I spoke truly. There was no earthly reason that they should do me injury, or allow it to be done.

"Do you refuse?"

"On such conditions—yes," I said, decidedly.

"Consider that the person is dying—that it is the wish of the dying—the intense wish."

He spoke in a tone of deep emphasis, which made me reconsider my determination. It seemed impossible that I should be made the unconscious accessory to any crime. I turned away and leaned my head on my hand. It was the strangest thing I had ever known.

"I will go," I said, at last; "but I do not wish to receive any money. A kindness to the dying is not to be bought."

"Be it so, then," responded the man. "You will prepare immediately to accompany us."

I went to my wife's room and told her that I was called to visit a sick person—took my overcoat and went back to my study, where the two men awaited me. We walked down the path to the road, where was a richly-appointed close carriage with a pair of horses attached; the driver's seat was vacant, and I instantly concluded one of the gentlemen was to drive, which was correct.

"Allow me," said the man next me, and he deftly arranged a handkerchief over my eyes, and helping me into the carriage, stepped in after me. The other sprang upon the driver's box, and the horses darted away, taking the road north; but we soon turned, and turned again, and I had no idea of the direction in which we were going.

We rode at a steady fast trot. Once we passed through a large town, I was quite sure, for though the streets were not paved, they were very good, and, somehow, I fancied there were houses on both sides the street; we met two carriages then also. Then we left the town, and in something like an hour after turned in somewhere, and drove along a gravelled approach, and then stopped. The whole ride had occupied about three hours, I should judge—and riding rapidly all the time.

They led me up the steps—across a piazza, and along a hall thickly carpeted. Upstairs we went—noiselessly, for the thick soft covering of the stairs destroyed the sound. There was something in the atmosphere of the house which told me it was a luxurious house—an abode of great wealth. At last they stopped, and took the bandage from my eyes. There was a heavily carved oaken door directly in front of me.

"Go in there," said my conductor.

I did as I was told, and they did not follow me.

It was of princely magnificence, dimly lighted from one or two burners in the chandelier. I could not tell what particular articles gave to the room its appearance, but I had never dreamed of such splendour of upholstery, such gorgeous hangings, such marvellous mouldings and gildings. I thought the effect somewhat oppressive. There seemed something Eastern—some Oriental taste in this lavishness. A faint subtle, perfume pervaded the apartment, hardly distinguishable after a few moments.

On the table near the chandelier stood a birdcage containing some bright-plumaged bird who opened his sleepy eyes at me as I bent over it. I looked round for the person for whom I had been sent, for as yet I had seen no one.

At the far end of the large room, made thus large by the opening of the sliding doors, in the dusky light, I saw a crimson-draped bed. I turned up the light to a brighter flame, and went toward the bed. There was an unwonted beat to my heart as I approached, but I could form no possible conjecture as to who it was whom I should see. I passed round to where the curtains were looped widely back. I did not know until I saw her face that I certainly expected it to be a man whom I should see. I repressed the exclamation that rose to my lips, but I think a sudden pallor blanched my face as I saw Syrene. Deathly white, with such large eyes—oh, what a pang of dreadful heartache I felt—for her and for Arthur.

I took the thin, frail hand in mine, longing so earnestly to infuse some of my own strength and vitality into the weak frame.

She smiled in recognition of me, and faintly pressed my fingers. I thought I had never seen her more beautiful—with that glorious evanescent beauty that seems to elude us and fly to Heaven even while we gaze.

"It is just and right that I should tell you," she said, "that through your words I first learned the true religion. I could not choose but believe, and believing sincerely and truly, it was impossible to pretend that I was still a Jewess. It is for belief in the Christian religion that I am dying."

She paused, but I did not speak; I could not command my voice. A horror came upon me as I listened to her last words.

"You have promised never to reveal anything. I trust it to you. It was hard to die utterly alone. Oh, no one knows the bitterness of a Jew to a renegade! I have been utterly in the power of my brothers—as completely as any slave of old was in the hands of the master. Kind and indulgent in everything else, they were inexorable in this. Their sister should die rather than become a Christian."

She spoke slowly and with an effort, but I saw that she wished to speak, and I would not interrupt her. I gave her a drink from the table near her, and in a few moments she continued:

"No power on earth could make me abjure the religion so dear to me. Each day my brothers have questioned me—but I have the same blood that flows in their veins—I could be firm as they—and I could not deny the truth. Now, when there is no hope for my life, they have at last granted my prayer to see you."

Another pause, but she seemed a little stronger since swallowing the cordial.

"There were two reasons why I wished to see you—either one of which would have been powerful. It is you who opened the door of truth to me—it is you who are the uncle of Arthur."

The unutterable tenderness of her tone as she spoke that name—the divine look in her eyes! Could my nephew ever recover from such a loss? And yet he could not lose a love like that, only the visible presence, which is so unspeakably dear.

I spoke to her as well as I could from the fullness of my heart, the profound mingling of joy and sorrow in my soul. I told her of Arthur's probable return.

Since she had been ill she had received no letters from him, they having been intercepted by her brothers. There was a dying flash in her eyes as she thought of his return—a wild, painful longing to welcome him.

"You cannot tell him that you have seen me; but oh, comfort him!" she cried, her white hands clasped earnestly over that tumultuous, yet feebly beating heart.

Some dreadful rebellion rose for an instant in my heart; some fierce human longing for justice, so fierce that it partook of revenge.

I prayed as I had never prayed before. The fervour of my soul went up to Heaven. That prayer soothed me as it did her. She had struggled too long and too terribly not to feel the blessed rest of resignation which prayer sends to the weary. If she had not known Arthur, she could have left the world with only a sense of triumph and gladness.

A low knock at the door by which I entered now sounded.

"It is the signal for you," she said.

"Heaven has blessed you," I said, lowly, looking into the deep dark eyes, and holding the thin hand in both my own.

"Farewell!"

A murmur: red adieu, a thrilling glance which I shall always remember, and I left her.

At the door I found one of the two men.

Silently we went out of the house and down to the carriage, I being blindfolded previously. There were fresh horses, and we rode back even faster than we had come. We stopped, and I was let out of the carriage. It was not at my house, but some miles and a half away from it.

"We are sorry to leave you here," said my companion, "but it is nearer daylight than we anticipated; and it is not advisable for us to take you home, for it might excite remark."

I stood silent, glad of the early release from their proximity.

"We are sure you will remember your promise," he said, "otherwise it will not be well for you. Take this in token of our gratitude—as one gentleman offers a gift to another."

He held out a purse to me. It would have been impossible for me to have touched that money.

I turned away.

"I will not take the money. I have my own opinion about gentlemen."

"Very well. Good morning."

He entered the carriage and soon disappeared.

I went home and into the study, not appearing to my family until dinner-time, though my wife came to see if I were ill, and to ask who had sent for me—but she did not discover.

Dear as I loved Arthur, I actually dreaded his coming home. Before the six months were out he returned. He went to London first, to the known residence of Syrene. The family had moved away months before, it was not known where. The house was occupied by a strange family. Arthur was turning away, when the domestic, who had looked at him sharply, asked his name.

"Arthur Campbell."

"There was a letter left here a great while ago for a man of that name."

The letter was given him. I have it before me now. It was this:

"The girl whom you love is dead. I, her brother, tell you so, and I swear it is true. I would save you the endless search you would otherwise commence."

Arthur came home to me with that letter. Some intuition told him that it was true, and I was certain of it. I told him I had learned Syrene had been very ill—that I believed the letter. If ever my heart bled for any one it was for him. Silently, without any outward demonstration, he kept that sorrow in his heart, to wear at his life's foundations. No more the careless free lad of old—for ever to be a man of grief and desolation, for ever looking forward to the end of this life.

It was not quite a year after his return that he went one day to hunt in a neighbouring town. He rode incessantly almost; it seemed the only way he could endure time. At sunset of that night a carriage stopped at our gate, and two or three men brought in Arthur, just in time for him to die in the arms of his adopted father; in time for me to see once more in his eyes the gleam of an old happiness; to hear his whisper:

"At last I go to her."

I could not but bless Heaven that he had been called away. In the chase his horse had fallen and mortally wounded his rider. I knew Arthur thought his dear old charger had at last done him the best service of all.

It is many years since then. I regarded my promise long—with many doubts as to the strength of such a promise. At last I break it thus. E. H.

FACTS.

WHY must Eating be objectionable to Good Templars?—It is compounded of A.L.E. and G.I.N.—*Fun.*

WHY is London not London?—A walk through the streets any day will show you that it is Van Demon's Land.—*Judy.*

A rich Siamese merchant, visiting England, on being asked if he was a native of Siam, haughtily replied: "Of course, Siam."

A young man was much enraged on receiving an invitation from his sweetheart to "come and play your cut this evening." She meant *écarté*.

EMPHATIC.—Old Lady (to Telegraph Clerk): "Oh, please, mister, just write me a telegram to my son John, and tell him to come home directly, and mind and put a dash under 'directly'!"—*Punch.*

HOL-Low THOUGHT.—When the Dover boat has to wait for the tide off Calais Pier you may safely assume that the water is l'eau on the French Coast.—*Fun.*

PLAIN ENGLISH.

Lady: "Well, boy, and what are pheasants today?"

Bright Specimen: "They're birds, ma'am."—*Judy.*

CAUTION.—A correspondent wants to know whether some safe public method of conveyance should not be provided for persons like his wife, who temper is so terribly explosive in its character that it is highly dangerous to travel in her company.—*Punch.*

SERVE HIM RIGHT.

Wife: "What did Jumbo get for assaulting his wife?"

Husband: "He was remanded."

Wife: "Lor! I should a-thought he would have got three months."—*Judy.*

LATEST IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

Young Lady: "Have you seen Bridget about? I can't find her anywhere!"

Pat: "Shure an bedad didn't I see her jist now asleep in the kitchen, watching the bread baking."—*Fun.*

NEW TOURISTS.—The passion for foreign travel is extending. It is no longer confined to men. It seems to have seized upon other portions of the animal creation—one especially, which might have been thought little likely to be subject to its influence. A book is announced with the title "Insects Abroad." Let us hope that many of them have gone abroad never to return.—*Punch.*

"HOW HAPPY COULD I BE WITH HEATH—"

Brown: "This beats all your Scotch moors, old boy, I can tell you!"

Jones: "I should think so, indeed. By-the-way, Brown, have you ever been in Scotland?"

Brown: "No! Have you?"

Jones: "Scotland! Why, I've never been farther than Hounslow in my life!"—*Fun.*

A SIMPLE STORY.

Mr. Popson is not much of a sportsman, but you

see he rented some shooting, because he had been recommended walking exercise. At the end of the first day he told his keeper to take care of the game, as he calculated that they would cost him a guinea a-head.

"In that case, sir," said the keeper, "you'll be glad there's no more of 'em."—*Judy*.

THE ABOLITION OF SECOND-CLASS CARRIAGES.

First Passenger (with filthy clay pipe): "I'm afraid you don't like the smell of 'baccy, sir?"

Second Passenger (with regalia): "Haw—not other people's—haw."

First Passenger: "All right, sir. Anything to oblige a gen'lman. Just 'and us over one of your weeds, and I'll put out my pipe!"—*Punch*.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE.

Booby Parent (whose daughter has a weakness for an artist): "I hear that you take walks with that picture-making fellow. Have no more to say to him! A pretty fellow, with scarcely a coat to his back!"

Smart Grandson: "Oh, come now, gran'pa, he's not much worse off than you in that respect, for it was only yesterday I heard the doctor say you hadn't any coat to your stomach!"—*Pun*.

WILD SPORTS.

The Sportsman (from the wood): "Hallo, Tonsonby! you've had a good place. We've heard you blazing away all the afternoon. How many have you bagged?"

Tonsonby (a town man): "Oh, bother your tame pheasants. I've tree'd a magnificent tom-cat here, and had splendid sport; but I can't hit him. You come and try!"—*Punch*.

EXTRAORDINARY JUVENILITY.

The Newcastle Chronicle announces that—
For stealing a hat and a pound of grapes, the property of Thomas Watson, a boy, Henry Carlisle, 21 years of age, was yesterday sent to prison for three months by the Newcastle magistrates.

The proverb which says indefinitely that "boys will be boys" appears to be at least partially borne out in the case above quoted. If a boy does not cease to be a boy at twenty-one, when will he be a man?

But the *Nottingham Express* also recently contained the following advertisement:—

Wanted, at 63, Clarendon-street, Terrace Royal, a Nurse for children, age from 20 to 30.

Hence it would appear not only that boys will be boys, but also that girls will be girls, as children, of course, mean youth of both sexes. No doubt there are plenty of girls, so called, aged from twenty to thirty; but they do not want nurses—at least whilst they are well, and many girls of thirty object to tell their age.—*Punch*.

CRUELTY TO CABMEN.

At a recent indignation meeting of the cabmen of London, held to decry the idiocy of a driver who had actually restored some property left in his cab, it was decided unanimously, as well as without contradiction:

That there is no distance less than three miles in the metropolis, and more if possible.

That no cabman worthy of the name ever possesses change. Change was made for slaves and 'busmen. That every cabman is to be considered innocent, even after he has been proved guilty.

That all policemen were born the natural enemies of cabmen; and the magistrates are even worse.

That passengers are always prejudiced and passionate.

That drivers are a deal too disinterested and mild in their manners.

That any effort to improve the cabs of London be most strenuously opposed by this meeting. "They're too good as it is for half on 'em."

That two and two shall always make six, and ten if possible in the cabman's ready reckoner.

That Mrs. Giacometti Progers be blowed.

That the word of a cabman is better than the oath of copper.

That an interval for refreshment do now take place, and that a vote of thanks and sixpence be tendered the chairman.—*Pun*.

SIMPKINS'S HAT.

Our friend Simpkins is not rich. In fact, Simpkins is in the very last stages of impecuniosity. Nevertheless, he had, until very recently, managed to keep up a very respectable appearance. He was careful of his wearing apparel—kept his garments sponged and brushed, and was painfully solicitous concerning the gloss of his hat. Simpkins found board and lodging at the fashionable establishment of Mrs. Armenia Dolorosa.

One evening as Simpkins was coming in a little late to tea, he met in the hall a man with his arms full of hats.

"Hallo!" said Simpkins, "What are you doing with those hats?"

"I have orders from some of the gentlemen to take their hats down to Marshall's to have them

dressed and smoothed by the morning," answered the man, in an honest, business-like way.

"Are you sure they'll be done by the morning?"

"Yes, sir. We are to work at 'em all night, if necessary."

"Well," said Simpkins, "you may take mine, too, if you have no objection."

"None in the least, sir. One hat more won't make much difference."

And Simpkins passed over his hat, and went down to supper.

Later there was a great commotion and uproar in the hall. Simpkins came up to find out what was the matter.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Some thief has stolen our hats!" replied several of the boarders, in concert.

"Mercy!" groaned Simpkins, "and mine, too, is gone!"

But he did not at that time tell how closely, though unwittingly, he had been in collusion with the freebooter.

THE CONNOISSEURS.

A FABLE FROM THE SPANISH OF YEABATE.

WITHIN a wine-vault once arose

A quarrel—so the story goes—

Among the Bacchanalian crowd,

So fierce and bitter, long and loud,

It fairly threatened broken laws

And bloody noses—all because

Two parties held conflicting views

About the fittest way to choose

Their beverage! Some stoutly held,

"A first-rate tap is always old;

At least a thousand proofs attest

The oldest always is the best,

Not till the cunning spiders spin

A million lines across the bin,

Do men of sense imbibe the juice;

Then, only then, 'tis fit for use,

Pure, mellow, fragrant, ripe; in fine

Worthy the glorious name of wine!"

The others just as roundly swear

"New wine is best. Age," they declare,

"Is far more apt to mar than mend

Good wine (whatever fools pretend),

And then 'tis oft a mere device,

Got up by rogues to raise the price!"

While thus, with wrath that grew to rage,

Their foolish feud the wrangles wage,

Up spoke a stranger from Nature:

"Cease, gentlemen, your wordy war!

I've tipped wine of every sort,

Canary, Malta, Xeres, Port,

And many a famous tap beside;

All brands and ages have I tried;

The white, the red, the old, the new,

The good, the bad, the false, the true;

I've drunk in cellar, booth and inn;

I've drank from bottle, cask, and skin,

And if there be a judge of wine,

To know the fair, the foul, the fine,

In glass or bumper, cup or can—

By jolly Bacchus! I'm the man!

Crude experts! Take my word,

For all the nonsense you have heard,

About the charm of 'old' or 'new,'

'Tis trial only tests the true!

Old wine may still be wretched stuff,

And new wine excellent enough

For men or gods. No rule on earth,

Save drinking can decide its worth.

Give me good wine, and I'll engage

I'll not inquire about its age!"

L'ENVOI.

In books and art some bid us seek

The highest worth in the "antique;"

While other critics (just as wise)

No genius but the "modern" prize;

In judging either, I protest

I think the toper's rule is best! J. G. S.

GEMS.

THE seeds of love can never grow but under the warm and genial influence of kind feelings and affectionate manners.

THE rose on the cheek and the canker at the heart do not flourish at the same time; and he who has much to think of must take many things to heart, for thought and feeling are one.

It cannot be too deeply impressed on the mind that application is the price to be paid for mental acquisitions, and that it is as absurd to expect them without it as to hope for a harvest where we had not sown a seed.

HAVE you made one happy heart to-day? Envious privilege. How calmly you can seek your pillow, how sweetly sleep! In all this world there is no-

thing so sweet as giving comfort to the distressed, as getting a sun-ray into a gloomy heart.

A DEVOUT man can never be called unfortunate. In the most trying circumstances he has within his breast a source of inexhaustible consolation.

LIFE.—There appears to exist a greater desire to live long than to live well. Measure by man's desires, he cannot live long enough; measure by his good deeds, and he has not lived long enough; measure by his evil deeds, and he has lived too long.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

WALNUTS AND FILBERTS.—The following is an excellent mode of preserving walnuts and filberts for eating: Put them into a common earthenware jar, with an earthenware lid, and bury the jar in the earth about a foot in depth, in a place not too wet or too dry.—Another way: Fill an earthen pot with them and then cover them with clay an inch thick. They will be found at Christmas as fresh as when first gathered.

STYRAX IN ITCH.—At the Stuttgart hospital they treat scabies with the following ointment: Styra, one ounce, olive oil and common spirits, each one drachm: mix. If an old case, the patient is first washed thoroughly with soft soap, nine to twelve times in three days, and then anointed with the above, one to three times a day. In recent cases the soft soap is not required. In 1,659 cases thus treated, every one was cured, although no precautions were taken to destroy the insects on clothing, and not one relapse occurred.

STATISTICS.

WHERE WE BUY AND WHERE WE SELL.—First come the United States. Thence in 1873 we imported merchandise of the value of 71,471,493*l.*, and thither we exported produce and manufactures of the value of 33,574,664*l.* France is second, our imports thence in 1873 being of the value of 48,339,234*l.*, and our exports of our products thither 17,291,973*l.* Next stands British India, our imports thence amounting to 29,890,802*l.*, and our own exports thither to 21,354,206*l.* From Germany our imports are 19,926,451*l.*, and our exports thither 27,270,342*l.* From Australia our imports are 1,726,706*l.*, our exports 17,610,152*l.* Our imports from Russia reach 21,189,331*l.*, our exports thither only 8,997,721*l.* From Holland our imports are 13,272,444*l.*, our exports thither 16,745,850*l.* Our imports from China, including Hong Kong, are 13,303,917*l.*, our exports thither 8,294,669*l.* Our imports from Egypt 14,155,918*l.*, exports thither 6,222,013*l.* Imports from British North America, 11,727,851*l.*, exports thither, 8,619,705*l.* Imports from Belgium 13,075,186*l.*, exports thither 7,200,949*l.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

At the last advices, Coggia's comet was brilliantly visible in Australia.

On Sunday night week a son was born to the Sultan at the palace of Teheran. On the following day the Grand Vizier proceeded to the palace to congratulate His Majesty on the happy event. The Sultana and the infant prince are doing well.

THE London School Board are keeping the police magistrates well employed. It was stated the other day that the prosecutions of parents for not sending their children to school have averaged from thirty to forty a week during the last month at Bow Street alone.

ON the site of the old Whitecross Street Prison, at a cost of 130,000*l.*, the Midland Railway Company are about to erect an extensive goods station and range of warehouses, forming their City goods depot. The warehouses, built of red brick, with Portland stone dressings, will be amongst the loftiest buildings in the City, the total height being 30 ft.

THE discovery is announced of the lost secret in the art of granulated gold work, as practised by the Etruscans and Greeks. This secret has hitherto defied all the efforts of our best English and continental professional experts; even the Castellani of Rome, in whose family the subject has been made a study for generations, found the problem too difficult to solve.

THE city of Paris, which already owes more money than any small Power, is about to raise 8,000,000*l.* to pay off pressing debts, and also to go on with some of the indispensable improvements commenced by Baron Haussmann. In the meantime there is a good deal of distress. In the eight quarters of Paris appeals for charity have been posted up by that large establishment called the Bureau de Bienfaisance. Cold weather has set in, and there are prospects of an early and severe winter.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. J.—We do not reply by post.
 LOVING NELL.—We cannot say.
 E. W. K.—The reply is much too indefinite.
 J. H. (Sevenoaks).—Not very good, as it seems to us.
 ROSEBUD.—Your question was answered in No. 598.
 D. M.—We are unable to comply with such an unusual request.
 A. C.—Your request will meet with every consideration in the proper quarter.
 J. P.—Advertisements of the description you have sent are not inserted in this page.
 MELLIE ANNET.—The handwriting is radically good, but is disfigured or disguised by haste or carelessness.
 FREDERICA.—Musical albums can be procured at the shops of stationers who are in a large way of business. An engagement ring is worn on the left hand on the finger next the little finger.
 R. S. (Crown).—The last two trifles received from you appear to be of a similar description to many others you have sent, which, after careful consideration, we have been unable to use.
 F. L.—A woman who has left her husband cannot by any course of conduct she may pursue compel him to petition the Court for a divorce. Such proceeding on the husband's part is optional.
 ROSE.—Since he does not seem inclined to pursue the matter, it is worth while, think you, still to urge it? Perseverance is not always a virtue. There may be occasions when persistency leads to a waste of time, if not to something worse.
 R. M. K.—Maize, or Indian corn, will ripen in England, and the ears will attain considerable size. It is an extremely handsome plant during growth, and the kernels are very palatable when cooked—being something like green peas in flavour.
 M. C. P.—Your note is quite silent upon the subject of personal appearance; if this does not always influence the choice of a lady seeking a husband, she at least desires to be informed of the special type of humanity with whom she is solicited to correspond.
 ALICE.—If our memory is correct, we attended, two or three weeks ago, to a letter from you on the same subject as the letter to which we now reply. We adhere to the opinion then expressed, namely that the information and description given of yourself was too meagre to answer any practical purpose.
 J. B.—To remove scurf from the hair: Dissolve one ounce of best primrose soap in three pints of warm water and wash the hair with the solution. The hair should be previously anointed with salad oil, and afterwards rinsed with warm and then with cold water. This process should be gone through twice or thrice a week.
 M. P.—As you seem to have done all that can be expected of you, you must now, we suppose, wait the good pleasure of your sweetheart that is to be. You will perceive that we have found it necessary to use the future form of the verb and you are aware that with futurity contingency is often, though not necessarily, associated.
 TAZONI.—Half an ounce of tobacco per week is a moderate allowance for a smoker, and could, we think, be used without detriment by a person who had a taste for the soothing weed. But tobacco is a luxury which should be denied to the very young; the age of twenty-two or twenty-three is quite early enough to begin to smoke.
 N. G.—1. The better plan is to send the coat to the dyers, because in the first attempt an amateur might spoil the garment. 2. A person who in answering any examination paper or papers gained 100 marks per cent. would simply be perfect in that particular branch of his examination to which such a percentage was awarded. Sixty per cent. of marks is the usual number required for a pass certificate, and seventy-five per cent. for a certificate of honour.
 SARAH.—How to make rolls. One quart of cold boiled milk, two quarts of flour, one large tablespoonful of lard rubbed into the flour. Make a hole in the middle of the flour, take one-half cup of yeast, one half-cup of sugar, add the milk, and pour into the flour, with a little salt; let it stand as it is until morning, then knead it hard, and let it rise. Knead again at four o'clock in the afternoon, cut out ready to bake, and let them rise again. Bake twenty minutes.
 BLANCHET.—Take plenty of walking exercise in the fresh air and use the bath freely. Glycerine mixed with elder water is good for the hands, the mixture should be rubbed on at night. A good toothpowder is made by mixing together half a teaspoonful of bole armenia, the same quantity of roche alum, and one ounce of prepared chalk. Your other ailments will be alleviated by the exercise and abstinence recommended above.
 G. C. S.—We are not pleased with the lines you have written about "Health." In themselves they are lame and not musical and in their notions they are not accurate.

rate. For example, you do right in your last stanza to exalt health at the expense of the world's wealth, pomp, power and pleasure; but to apostrophize these particular vanities by the name of a "vacuum" is erroneous as well as inconsistent with propriety of expression. You have evidently forgotten the adage "Nature abhors a vacuum."

A SUBSCRIBER.—The receipted bills are only evidence for themselves. That is, they prove that the amount specified upon them has been paid, but nothing more; therefore if upon any one of them there does not appear some such words as "balance brought forward" the last receipt will not prove the payment of an account which was allowed to stand over. You can, however, support your plea of payment by your oath and you should do so and avoid the repetition of such a piece of folly as paying twice for the same thing.

LUCY.—The matter is certainly a very delicate one; but surely your kind, womanly heart can devise some way of breaking the hard truth to your elderly suitor, without at the same time arousing his anger—we fear, his just anger—against the more favoured one. We fancy "Lucy" is somewhat of a coquette, and that, impelled by a desire to have "two strings to her bow," she has allowed things to drift into a sad entanglement. Let her, above all, be true—to both to the favoured and to the rejected swains.

OCTACAMUND.—1. Present your application, in which should be embodied particulars of your qualification for the post, to the proprietor or manager or editor of a newspaper. 2. Many begin as early as 25. The particular branch of learning which any individual intends to make his speciality rests, of course, with himself. 3. Not absolutely necessary. 4. Some knowledge of foreign languages is essential, the quantum would depend on the position aspired to. Influence is perhaps the only thing that will secure an engagement. Tact and discretion should be added to intellectual power by any candidate for such an appointment.

LADY FLORENCE.—1. Glycerine and elder-flower water combined. 2. Plenty of walking exercise during the winter months. 3. Regular out-of-door exercise, and, if necessary, such medicine as may be suitable to your constitution. 4. The natural colour of the complexion cannot be radically altered; it may be artificially subdued by means of violet-powder the use of which we do not recommend. 5. Sprites of tincture judiciously applied. 6. The handwriting is exceedingly neat and pretty. Handwriting is, however, so often studied, disguised or feigned that it is unsafe to rely upon it as affording any insight to character.

BIRD AND BABY.

My bird is singing his sweetest song,
 His notes are soft and clear,
 And the music falls with a joyous thrill
 On my baby's listening ear.

Now she holds her tiny head erect,
 And she opens her eyes so blue,
 And watches the singer's swelling throat,
 As the notes sound clear and true.

Together she folds her small white hands,
 And her red lips fall apart,
 And a wondering look lights her fair young face,
 As the sweet song touches her heart.

And still she listens as birdie sings—
 Now she half-way smiles, and sighs,
 As a sweeter strain of a new-learned song
 The musical birdie tries.

Such a slender throat! Baby wonders how
 It thus enigmatically sings—
 It is just as strange that a little child
 Should be to our hearts so dear.

M. E. L.

AN INQUIRER.—"Protoplasm" is a term used by some modern physiologists, notably Professor Huxley, to designate the presumed original substance of which all organic bodies, animal or vegetable, are formed—in Mr. Huxley's own words "the physiological basis, or matter, of life." It is composed of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen, and is considered by writers of a certain school as "living clay." Of course, this philosophy distinctly tends towards materialism; and, despite the fame of its principal exponent, the theory is wholly lacking in proofs, and is contradicted by some very distinctive facts.

ST. CECILIA.—1. The organ is doubtless the monarch of musical instruments. Unquestionably within its limited range the violin is the most marvellous exponent of passion and pathos that the genius of man has ever constructed. But the violin has no power to interpret those grand masterpieces of harmony which require for their rendering an instrument having orchestral resources, and such an instrument the organ is. 2. Your great difficulty will be in learning the use of the pedals and the proper combination of the various stops; but if by previous practice upon the piano or harmonium you have obtained command over the manual, attention will soon render the pedalling, etc., easy to you.

VILLAGE NELL.—1. A deed, such as you describe, if signed by the young lady, would be inoperative, because she is under age, and because it is not for her benefit. Although certain statutory powers have been conferred upon infants, the Court would never sanction a deed with such provisions as those to which you allude. 2. The handwriting is not to our taste; it is faint, scratching, careless, has traces of better ability and looks as if the pen of a good calligraphist had wandered almost anywhere in order that its individuality and identity might be suppressed. 3. It seems to us that a young lady aged sixteen is too young to have a lover, that is to say a lover with serious intentions; for, of course, the engraving of "Miss Lily's first flirtation" is familiar to us all, and the artist has made her appearance very much younger than sixteen.

G. E. O.—1. The handwriting is good, good enough for all practical purposes. 2. The Christian name Gilbert is derived from the Teutonic and signifies "Light of many." William, also from the Teutonic, means "Helmet, or helm, of many." 3. The portrait you have sent for notice seems to represent a lady possessing great powers of penetration and common-sense, with a strength of purpose arising rather from natural causes than from

force of will. Although the countenance appears to be stirred with a smile, this seems to arise less from any feeling of affection or joy than from a consciousness of power. Those handsome eyes, we are afraid, would look terrible things whenever which has been called the defensive affection of anger might be aroused. Yet are there men who greatly admire a face of this description. Forgetting the lower portion and thinking only of the upper half of the countenance, they would pronounce this lady handsome. Others again might wish for less force and more beauty, for less determination and more tenderness; that some of the solid strength should be replaced by a fair share of active energy, and that it should be impossible for love to shine out of those eyes, compassion at least might be found there. This wish might be pronounced against by a third critic, who might ask why should such a fair specimen of creation be deprived of her inestimable powers of attraction? He would call the face pretty and dispose of all those appearances about it which have troubled us during our inspection by saying, that they were just the sort of things to enable her to make a comfortable home. As for the projecting under lip, that is what he prefers—indeed, the massiveness of the whole figure is to him in no way repellent. Strength, even in still life, is his belle ideal. The graces are they not myths? "Give me something substantial," says he. Well, there he has it. And, gentle reader, is it not a good thing that tastes and opinions differ, that nature delights in variety, and that notwithstanding the criticisms of other people men and women will still judge for themselves?

ALPHA, forty, a widow, and fond of home, wishes to meet with a young woman, or widow, to share his home.

S. P. wishes to marry a rather tall, dark young man, who is musical, good looking, and fond of home. "S. P." is fair, blue eyes, rather tall, and good looking.

ETHEL, nineteen, medium height, dark eyes, and considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a dark young gentleman, with a view to matrimony.

BERT, twenty, sunburnt hair, gray eyes, fair complexion, and well educated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman, either dark or fair; he must be good looking.

PEARL, eighteen, dark-brown hair, dark-blue eyes, and considered very handsome, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman, either dark or fair; he must be handsome, of good connections, and fond of music.

SHIR'S FAIRIE, 5ft. 7in., considered good looking by his mesmates, blue eyes and light hair, would like to correspond with a fair young lady, with a view to matrimony. She should be about twenty-one, and fond of home.

MAY, seventeen, light-brown hair, dark-gray eyes, fair complexion, and considered very pretty, wishes to correspond with a dark young gentleman, of good family, handsome, and fond of music and dancing.

NELLIE, twenty, tall, fair, and considered not bad looking, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman, about twenty-six, tall, dark, with a small income, and fond of home.

FLORENCE, seventeen, light-chestnut hair, hazel eyes, very loving, domesticated, and good tempered, has an attentive ear for singing and music and a passable voice, would like to correspond with a young actor or singer, who is kind and fond of home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

VARA is responded to by—"Honesty," twenty-four, a Good Templar, dark, fond of home, and thinks he would suit her exactly.

FLYING JIB HALTARDS by—"Keturah," nineteen, fair, gray eyes, light-brown hair, cheerful, and fond of home.

ERNEST by—"Blue Bell," rather short, dark hair and eyes, good looking, very affectionate, and will make a loving and gentle wife.

WILLIAM HEAR by—"L. S.," twenty-five, medium height, a native of London, fair, domesticated, and thinks she would make a working man a good wife.

FREDERIC by—"Cherry," twenty, tall, rather stout, good looking, dark-brown hair, blue eyes, and will make a loving wife.

NIMROD by—"Ellen F.," twenty-eight, who would make a good and loving wife; and by—"E. C.," twenty-seven, medium height, rather dark, not bad looking, and thoroughly domesticated.

TOM D. by—"Lonely Effie," petite, but would do her best to make his home the happiest little spot on earth; by—"Rose," twenty-two, medium height, brown hair, considered good looking, is of a loving disposition, fond of home, and thinks she is all that he requires; and by—"Curly Head," twenty, not very tall, considered pretty, fond of home, and thoroughly domesticated.

* Letters from the following have also been received:—Young Charlie (too indefinite); Tom Tuff; Eastern Bob; Dinan; and Happy Harry (against the rule).

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